MASTERS AND MEN

BY PHILIP GUEDALLA

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MASTERS AND MEN

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MASTERS AND MEN

ESSAYS BY

PHILIP GUEDALLA

Scaramouche et Pulcinella
Qu'un mauvais dessein rassembla
Gesticulent, noirs sur la lune.
FANTOCHES

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TO
MY MOTHER

NOTE

Thanks are due to the Editors of the New Statesman, Daily News, Weekly Westminster Gazette, *and* Literary Review *of the* New York Evening Post *for permission to make use of material which originally appeared in their columns.*—P. G.

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MASTERS

The Egoists
The Soldiery
Masters of Arts
Gentlemen of the Long Robe
Ministers of State
A Colonel
A Solicitor
An Archbishop
A Grand Duchess
An Old Master
A Fabian
A Jurist
Two Princes
A Few Foreigners

THE EGOISTS

YEARS ago, when there were horse omnibuses in Oxford Street and editors could still afford a sense of style, someone (there were so many of them in those days) wrote a penetrating little essay about the changes of fashion. Those were the times when they knew all about fashion ; Mr. Wilde had a great deal to say on the subject, and one could buy a portrait of Mrs. Langtry at any photographer's. He wrote it for one of those dapper little magazines, all

all Whistler and margin, which diversified the later years, but not (one fears) the book table of Queen Victoria ; and it had all the accomplishment, the rich allusion, the delicate touch which one associates with a sluggish circulation, a cruel but progressive emaciation of the advertisements, and an early death. Even the names have faded. Perhaps Mr. Le Gallienne wrote something for them ; perhaps they had a wicked drawing by Mr. Beerbohm. One remembers only the little essay about fashions. It was so *fin de siècle*, so tremulously daring. The writer played elegantly with the changing shapes of clothes, and then (he must have been to Paris once, and probably on the left, the naughtier bank of the Seine) he hinted that the mutability of fashion extended even to the fashion in virtues. Having launched his wicked paradox, he tilted his hat and, seeing an epigram in the distance, strolled

strolled jauntily off up a side-issue, as an essayist should.

But there was something in it. One had felt for a long time that fashions in good behaviour are subject to change; and so, for the matter of that, are fashions in good writing. Absolute standards of literary propriety may satisfy Quintilian, whose writings possess the peculiar quality of being continually quoted by persons who have never read them. But one hesitates to weigh the moderns in the rigid scales which do well enough to put the ancients in their places. It seems almost brutal to test the little fellows by the chilly canons of literary perfection; and one is bound to admit, unless one is prepared for a more than usually sanguinary Massacre of the Innocents, that there are changes in literary virtue. There is, to adopt a fragment of contemporary jargon, a relativity in these matters. It may be expounded

expounded at any moment by Lord Haldane.

What one means is that the critic should not condemn the literary output of one age because it is lacking in the literary virtues of another. It is one of the most popular forms of criticism to denounce something for not being something else. Our dramatic critics constantly revile vaudeville because it is not *King Lear*. The method affords opportunities for an impressive demonstration by the critic of his cultured awareness of *King Lear* ; and it bravely ignores the falsetto protest of the librettist that had it been his intention to write *King Lear*, it would have said so on the programme. But it is bad criticism : that is why one sees so much of it about.

Yet one is sometimes tempted to rebuke our contemporaries by a hoarse, concerted, and vigorous demand that the literature of the Twentieth (or is it the twenty-first?)

first ?) Century shall display at least one of the faded virtues of the Eighteenth. Reticence—what a glint of shoe-buckles, what a rustle of brocade there is in the quaint old word—has become one of the lost arts. One has grown to think of it, with ballad writing and the staining of window-glass, as a gracious thing that has faded out of the human repertory. It would be nice to set people asking how they used to do it. We might even have a Pre . . . ite Brotherhood, whose quiet exercises on this muted, old-world instrument would excite that general derision which ensures the support of the young. But it must be the right sort of reticence. One is not claiming to exercise an aunt-like supervision of the subjects appropriate for treatment in literature. That is the function of the police ; and one is glad that our newest schools provide them with so much reading which they must find profoundly helpful in the more

more dismal parts of their grim calling. The reticence of which one sometimes feels the need is that branch of literary decorum which once dictated to any well-conducted writer of the Eighteenth Century a rigid exclusion from his work of himself, his personal concerns, his own (the word was happily unknown, since there were no interviewers), his sacred, personality. It might be tolerated in an eccentric like Sterne ; Mr. Gibbon could grimace in the privacy of a footnote. But until that dreadful person wrote his *Confessions* (and the man was obviously a foreigner), it was an act of literary bad breeding to obtrude oneself upon the reader.

Not so the moderns. Grimacing with the self-consciousness of nasty children, they press round us with an insistent exhibition of their sins, their complexes, their secret sorrows. One feels, as one looks along

along a library shelf, as though one had been caught in a crowd of beggars outside a Spanish church. Mr. Compton Mackenzie thrusts his latest autobiography under our noses and asks for a copper ; his younger imitators rattle their tins for alms and show their spiritual scars ; Colonel Repington thumps the pavement with a wooden leg and declaims the story of his life ; eager ladies flap private diaries in our faces ; and the whole crowding orgy of self-revelation cries out for the police to move it on. That is why one turns back, a little faintly, to the Eighteenth Century, when impersonal pens told frozen stories in a manner so detached that the author seemed always to be looking the other way.

It has been a long time coming. When the Victorians were autobiographical, they were rather knowing about it. A furtive nudge from the novelist's biographer was the

the strongest intimation that he had permitted a shadow of himself to stray into his own story ; one felt that it was an interesting delicacy. But when the dams of reticence were broken (it was before the war), the water came down with a rush. It seems, as one looks back at it, to have begun with *Sinister Street*. Mr. Compton Mackenzie dressed up his early memories with consummate art and a highly remarkable vocabulary ; and if the matter had ended there, no harm would have been done. But his brilliant example fired the duller ambitions of every undergraduate in at least two universities, and we were favoured with the memoirs (in thin fictional disguise) of quite a number of profoundly uninteresting young men. They presented us with a body of novels whose range coincided exactly with the range of the author's experience ; if he was twenty-five years old, the reader left him, aged twenty-four

twenty-four years and eleven months, waiting with his first manuscript on the publisher's doorstep. Their memories were lamentably good, and their novels enjoyed that measure of success which is always assured for those whose friends are still young enough to review them. And there, one hoped, the mischief might have stopped. But there was a war.

One prayed for a few weeks that it had stopped the printing-presses. But the armies had not been in position for a month before the ink began to flow. The public appetite for information became insatiable. Men felt, in the war years and in the obscurer scuffles which constitute a peace, that their destinies were in the hands of a limited number of public characters whose peculiarities promptly became matters of international importance. The market in *personalia* bounded like a rate of exchange when someone has trodden on

on the tail of a Foreign Minister, and late in the year 1919 we were launched full into the period of revelations. They were not in the least like their Scriptural prototype. There was a marked absence of riders on pale horses ; and patriotic opinion in five countries was sharply divided as to where the last great beast was to be located. But one found instead a profusion of disclosures about public figures. Sometimes they did it themselves ; sometimes their friends did it for them ; and sometimes the disclosure left one doubting whether the friendship would survive the strain. But there was a uniform note of intimacy, of actuality, of little tales about real people. It seemed as though that dreadful column of the newspapers which obtrudes superfluous information about Lord ——'s taste for Apostle spoons and first editions of *The Vicar of Wakefield* had strayed from journalism into literature and managed

managed somehow to get itself bound up into large volumes. They were extremely expensive ; they were received quite respectfully ; and we passed at a step into the confessional period of English literature.

It offended against the decencies (if one may refer once more to the convention of the Eighteenth Century) at two points. There was the completest absence of self-effacement on the part of the author, and he uniformly sacrificed his friends to his royalties. One cannot pause to consider the complicated ethics of the diarist ; that is mainly a question for his relations and his club committee. But it is worth noticing that the outbreak, of which Colonel Repington was the most vivacious phenomenon, was not without its serious effects upon the general development of literary good manners. It served to accentuate several of the worst tendencies in contemporary letters, because it proved to demonstration

demonstration that one could make a highly successful book by writing about oneself with occasional digressions upon other people, provided always that they were real people. As a form of history it was questionable ; but as a form of fiction it was frankly offensive. M. Anatole France has observed, in a remark which so many people quote because it may be found quite easily in the preface of a long book of which they rarely trouble to read the remainder, that criticism should record the adventures of the soul among masterpieces. But one may conjecture that it would surprise that wise old gentleman (who is otherwise not easily shocked) to learn that fiction should record the adventures of the author among his acquaintances. Yet that, or something very like it, would appear to be the principle of construction underlying a large proportion of the fiction which passes under our eyes in its brief journey from

from the printer to the pulping-plant. The autobiographical novelists took notice of the success of the memoir-writers ; and the literary evils, which had been widely prevalent before the war, became frankly epidemic in the grim period of universal contagion which produced the influenza of 1919 and the novels of the Actual School.

We are living, except in those regions of rarefied intellect where they make books out of an engaging blend of nightmare and aphasia, in a period of weak-kneed realism. Our young friends despise the real master of their craft, whose name was Émile Zola. His work is, for some occult reason, *démodé* ; and we have instead an infinite number of rather hesitating attempts to reproduce reality by the simple and tasteless device of inserting intermittent portraits of real people. One is reminded, in reading novels of this type, of the imbecile ingenuity with which a modernist painter

painter occasionally sticks a real bit of feather or an authentic match-box on to his canvas in the desperate hope that this addition may somehow make his whirl of planes and cubes convincing as a Portrait of the Artist's Mother. It is a queer trick. Even Mr. Hugh Walpole, so judicious mostly in the exhibition of his talents, has offended by the gratuitous insertion of a few literary figures from the circle of his acquaintance. His book gained nothing from the addition, in the sense in which Daudet lit up *Le Nabab* by the brilliant gleam of reflected reality which glances off the iridescent figure of the Duc de Morny. One can hardly complain when a book which sets out to depict a particular world contains portraits of some of its actual denizens. You would not have *Eugène Rougon* meet pure figments of the imagination, when he went to stay for a few days at Compiègne at the invitation of Napoleon

Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie. That, one would explain to the attentive young novelist (and it is the fondest delusion of critics that they are read with attention and by the persons whom they criticise), that is quite a different matter. Mr. Wells may populate the Westminster of *The New Machiavelli* with a few samples of its actual *fauna*—or *flora*. If you are frankly reconstructing an epoch or depicting a *milieu*, you are entitled to draw (up to a limit fixed by your intellectual banker) upon a credit of reality. But if your professions are merely the general promise of the novelist to tell us a story, there is no reason except your own poverty of imagination or lack of good manners why you should trouble us with portraits of actual people. We can, we frequently do read all about them in the newspapers; and when we wish to purchase a newspaper for the price of a novel, we will say so.

That,

That, one feels, is the kind of protest which might be made with some advantage in the hearing of our young friends with the pens, ink, and paper, who destroy (with the aid of their far, far too tolerant publishers) so large a portion of our leisure.

But it should not be made with half so much vehemence as the other branch of our remonstrance. If it is objectionable to permit real figures to stray, like sheep across a cricket pitch, on to the stage of fiction, it is surely doubly detestable to allow us to see so much of the attitudinising author himself. It was the pleasing convention of the Eighteenth Century that the writer of the book appeared before the rise of the curtain ; he was seen for a moment to strike a graceful attitude in a Dedication. But as one turned the page and passed inside the trim little garden of his work, the memory of his sweeping bow faded and one found only the work itself. In those days

days writers were impersonal. The main interest of a book was its subject, not its author ; and he displayed the fullest, the most tactful appreciation of the situation by a complete effacement of himself. But Rousseau led in the *poseurs*, and quite soon the trumpets (or was it the voices ?) of the Romantics were braying at the gates. There was a sudden vogue for suffering seers, a taste for authors in attitudes, a call for the writer of the piece to show himself before the curtain wrapped in the impressive robe of his calling. Sometimes, in the eagerness of his response, the poor man tripped over it. Lord Byron was seen muttering darkly behind the scenes ; Mr. Wordsworth got his mild despairs mixed up with the view of Red Bank ; M. Victor Hugo struck terrific attitudes and played all his own characters right off the stage. It was the age of Egos.

Its later manifestations were milder, but no

no less (to the taste of the Eighteenth Century) inelegant. Mr. Thackeray grimaced behind his puppets, and quite soon young people took to writing books about themselves without even the faint pretence of any intervening theme. There was a young, unhappy lady named Bashkirtseff, and her *Selbst-porträt* became the model for innumerable Narcissi, each fascinated by a watery reflection of himself. The result, as one sees it at a distance, was the gradual extinction of the old impersonal author and the substitution for him of a grimacing showman,

Motley on back and pointing-pole in hand.

It seems a pity. One may be permitted to doubt whether the change (which is a very real one) is a change for the better. It is a modern axiom that self-expression is a substitute for genius. No novelist who is abreast of his age can manage to tell

tell us his story without at the same time telling us all about himself. But the art of letters seems to derive small improvement from the strong admixture of the confessional which it has received. One can have quite a good painting (Velasquez painted several) without a Portrait of the Artist worked modestly into one corner of it; you will learn all that you need about him from the painting itself. One has never heard that a tale of Flaubert was ill told because it contained no information as to his private manners. Mr. Conrad has managed to paint strange pictures of distant seas without a wealth of inset portraits of Mr. Conrad. So one would ask our little friends, who run about his knees, to mute the unwanted, the insistent personal note. Then perhaps we should begin to feel a little interest in them. We might even read them.

THE SOLDIERY

One would have said at the first blush (and the student of history—especially of Continental history—should always have a blush ready) that the artist who sets out to draw scenes from Swiss history is apt to draw blank. That country, so attractive to the eye and uniformly obliging to the casual visitor, is curiously baffling to the historian. Apart from the distinction of contributing Zwingli to the last page of every encyclopædia, it wears singularly few

few honours in the European record, and the historical imagination falls back on scenes in which nearly all the most prominent parts were played by foreigners. Napoleon crossing the Alps ; Hannibal, by a curious association of ideas, doing the same ; Mr. Gibbon writing in Lausanne ; M. de Voltaire writing at Ferney—these, and a few more, appear to be the sole events of European importance in Swiss history, and one arrives gradually at a pained realisation that the principal actors in them were not Swiss. Even Baedeker was a German. The national Valhalla (and surely a country so admirably supplied with the raw material of sculpture cannot subsist without a Valhalla) must contain little beyond the unheroic figures of MM. Nestlé and Suchard ; and even the bolder gesture of William Tell is too closely associated with a simple article of diet to be completely dignified.

Switzerland,

Switzerland, to the uninformed observer, must always seem to be one of those fortunate countries (the United States are another) which have a great deal of geography and very little history. Delightful to the map-maker and the railway-engineer as affording such extensive employment to the ingenuity of either, these favoured regions are equally delightful to the schoolboy, because there are no dates to remember. If there was a Declaration of Swiss Independence, no one is expected to know when it took place. If there was ever a Swiss Civil War (beyond the normal competition of rival hotel managements), it has escaped the notice of those indomitable amateurs of Civil Wars who investigate them for the films. Swiss history is the one subject of which a historian may safely confess ignorance. Even Mr. Beerbohm, to whose unwritten history of the Regency we owe so much, almost forgets his urbanity when his

his pen peoples Switzerland with " a smug, tame, sly, dull, mercenary little race of men " ; and when Mr. Bernard Shaw wishes to make the profession of arms ridiculous, he introduces a Swiss soldier.

Perhaps they are right. Perhaps the effort of living up to that tremendous background has exhausted the moral resources of the Swiss, until they have become little more than the tiny (but quite faceless) human figures which adorn the foreground of every competent landscape drawing. Yet one discovers with half a shock that the upper valleys of the Alps were not always populated by a race ready to oblige with an echo or some *edelweiss*, that there were Swiss industries before the loud tick of a cuckoo-clock had ever sounded across the mountain pastures, that Switzerland, in fact, possessed in its time most of those virtues of the mountain-tops which are associated, in the imagination of

of Mr. Lloyd George, with the far lower contours of Wales. There is always something a shade exasperating about the republican virtues. It was found by his countrymen to be so in the case of Aristides ; and the peculiar quality of " sturdiness," which is generally attributed by historians to the inhabitants of undulating territories, makes only the most limited appeal to the imaginative eye. One could wish somehow that their ideal was a shade taller. But in Switzerland the facts are against them.

That is, perhaps, why there is something almost startling in the discovery of the Swiss infantry. There is a dynasty, in the military history of Europe, of the successive masters of Continental battlefields. Before von Moltke's men in spiked helmets, it was the Grenadiers of the Guard. Before the French came the Spaniards. And before the slow pounding step

step of the Spanish musketeers, it was the Swiss pikemen. One half expects to-day to find them charging with the national cry of " Coming, Sir " ; and there is a good deal of irreverent reminiscence from which one must shade one's eyes, if one is to peer back into a time when tall Switzers lounged in bright colours under the tall arches of Renaissance doorways. Yet in that time, before the national aptitude for neutrality had been developed to its full growth, it was Swiss history rather than Swiss geography that constituted the main interest of the country. The detachment of Switzerland from the lumbering procession of heraldry and anachronisms miscalled the Holy Roman Empire is, for almost all of us, a strange new story. For a moment one sees the bullet-headed little men with a livelier expression in their eyes. But the vision fades ; and as it passes, the Swiss are overwhelmed once more by the climate

or

or the scenery. Switzerland becomes again an inert patient on the green table of Europe. Wise men bend over her with new prescriptions; Napoleon advises a thorough change of Constitution; someone invents the ignominious expedient of neutrality, which has acted like an anæsthetic on Swiss politics; and through it all Switzerland remains completely, blandly passive, "perfectly civilised and strifeless," as one historian sees her, "jewelled all over with freedom."

There is no gleam of the old light, no faintest echo of the heavy step of the Swiss infantry. We have instead the mild tap at the door, the cautious tread, the bright deposited tray of our kind familiar Swiss, with their "nine thousand six hundred pairs of sheets and blankets, with two thousand four hundred eider-down quilts . . . ten thousand knives and forks, and the same quantity of dessert spoons . . . and . . . three

. . . three native languages." That is the last that Europe sees of the pikemen of Marignano. One has an uneasy feeling that if an invading army passed the Swiss frontier, its luggage would be taken upstairs, whilst a courteous management arranged to accommodate all officers above the rank of major in rooms with a view of the glacier. Even the republican milk of mountain pastures is sold in tins at grocers' shops, whilst the citizens of the Confederation perform kindly but unimpressive duties in the grill-room.

Yet the exiled Swiss may have a future (it would be quite in their tradition), when the proletariat, having finally succeeded in learning one of those stirring songs which young gentlemen of the middle class are always writing for it, marches on the West End. There will be pale faces in the American Bar, and a low drone of men calling on the Prophet from the

the deft, dark persons whose normal occupation is the confection of strong coffee in small cups. But from somewhere up the street they will hear a hoarse cheer, as the long line of white shirt-fronts drives at the Revolution in the last charge of the Swiss Guard.

MASTERS OF ARTS

THE English (it is one of their most engaging features) dearly love an amateur. Bitterly resenting all imputations of professionalism, they perpetually side with the Gentlemen against the Players, a conceivable explanation of their frequent disappointment at the sporting intelligence. History, which in less enlightened communities is frequently the work of historians, has become in England a recreation for retired statesmen. The German, with brutal

brutal directness, may leave philosophy to philosophers; but it is known to Englishmen as a dignified pastime for ex-Ministers. Town-planning, for which American universities train laborious experts, lies in Great Britain (it is the secret of her urban charm) at the mercy of any Indignant Ratepayer or Father of Ten who chooses to employ his leisure in the composition of letters to the Press, stating with sufficient emphasis the case for a Processional Way punctuated with pylons and culminating in an efflorescence of serio-comic sculpture. And a public ear that is uniformly deaf to the trained utterance of professional writers will always thrill responsive to the voice of a poet-postman.

Everybody in England loves a part-timer. Indeed, there is a certain security in the feeling that the other part of his time may be quite intelligently employed. It is the essence of success, in a country which

which has applauded the politics of Lord Balfour and the mathematics of Lord Haldane, to appear (even if one cannot always be) an amateur. And the oddity of the national output, whether of legislation or of literature, is demonstrably due to the fact that it is mainly a by-product. Almost all the people who do anything in England have got something better to do. The tragedy is that they so rarely do it.

In such a country it is not surprising that the administrative problem presented by the war was immediately met by a search for public servants outside the ranks of regular administrators. That the nation's affairs should be directed at an awkward moment by the persons normally accustomed to direct them appeared, naturally enough, a solution of repellent banality, and the public service was promptly recruited by a series of the wildest and most delightful experiments. In the first stage an

an air of pleasing novelty was breathed into administrative life by the hurried transfer of military persons to all posts of civil importance. There was a hasty revival of the Cromwellian doctrine that a colonel is good enough for anything; and for a time this expedient sufficed to maintain that air of confusion which was requisite to bring the war, as they said, home. But as the colonels became habituated to their new surroundings, the tone of the service began to sink towards a dead level of efficiency, and it became necessary to introduce new blood. This, by a magnificent stroke, was detected in the City; and since about that time it had become necessary for the State to protect itself against the operations of business men, the requirements of comedy were plainly to be met by enlisting its new protectors from the ranks of its new enemies. The experiment was attended with the wildest success. The

The commercial community was rapidly transferred to those Departments which had been erected for its supervision, and collectivism was practised on an unprecedented scale by a large body of convinced individualists. The experiment of government by business men was carried still further ; and names of commercial eminence began to appear in the starry elevation of the Cabinet, whilst the people of England sat back to enjoy the slow pantomime procession of the Supermen.

Like most scientific experiments, it was noisy but inconclusive ; and towards the end of the war it became necessary to provide the country with a new diversion. With a brilliant change of cast the comedians were varied, and the curtain rang up on the new experiment of government by Judges. Practitioners, deservedly eminent in their profession and arrived in due course at the finality of the Bench, found themselves

themselves set to the oddest and most unaccustomed tasks of administration, which they discharged with admirable patience and concluded with obvious relief. Of this experiment there can be no explanation beyond a frivolous desire on the part of the executive to see the judicature with its wigs off.

By this time the conductors of the war were threatened with an outbreak of peace ; and it almost seemed as though by their previous experiments they had exhausted the possibilities of administrative charade. They had dressed colonels up as civil servants ; they had disguised railway managers as statesmen ; they had even (*proh pudor !*) stripped judges of their ermine. There seemed little material left in the country for another *tableau vivant*, and in default the conduct of our foreign affairs across the green table at Paris and Versailles was in grave danger of remaining in

in the hands of those official persons who had been expensively trained to conduct them. But by one of those strokes of inspiration which distinguish the revue-producer from the mere statesman one last experiment was devised. An Associated Power, it seemed, had entrusted its government to a person of academic distinction. President Wilson should be confronted by the embattled dons of England.

The farce was produced on the largest and most magnificent scale. Scholars were recruited with an ardour which recalled the earlier operations of the police under the Military Service Acts. Hastily equipped for a life of gay diplomacy in jacket suits supplied at the public expense for Paris wear, they were set to the composition of brief but informing brochures on countries which they had never visited. Fellows and Tutors followed Masters and Wardens overseas with something of the tragic,

tragic, hurrying eagerness of the Children's Crusade; and once in Paris, they discharged their ridiculous duties with that solemnity which has never failed the older universities in a false position. England had need of them, and they took their place in the Hotel Majestic as the last and most magnificent of the British amateurs.

Their service was well rewarded, as it deserved to be. Names once familiar on the slender backs of annotated texts (for schools) or on the broader labels of lexicons and atlases (for advanced students) began to creep into the mixed company of the Honours Lists. And on the night of Miss Zuleika Dobson's next visit to Oxford, when the Duke of Dorset puts on his Garter robes in his rooms in Broad Street and everyone else will appear wearing their full official distinctions, the polished tables of Senior Common Rooms will gleam with the

the reflected radiance of British and Allied decorations. The Most Excellent Order will predominate. But there will be also the Legion of Honour and the Crown of Belgium ; nor will the White Eagle and St. Vladimir (with swords) be unrepresented.

The record of the Peace Conference is being written under our eyes, and a trifle hurriedly, by an eager rush of autobiographers. Even a distinguished member of the academic contingent so far succumbed to the confessional atmosphere bequeathed by Rousseau to the capital of the Third Republic as to publish, with a happy disregard of the Official Secrets Act and behind the impenetrable screen of economics, his intimate recollections of M. Clemenceau's gloves and the hasty mutterings of financial experts in the corners of committee-rooms. But the story, as is only proper, has been recorded in a more elaborate

elaborate and academic form. A symposium of historians was gathered under the auspices of the Institute of International Affairs, an impressive and somewhat exclusive body which seems a trifle inclined to keep all Europe for the private province of the Lords Robert Cecil and Eustace Percy and is a little apt to adopt the irritating, furtive manner once assumed by Mr. Curtis and his masked knights of the Round Table for the secret federation of the British Empire and to adjust the world when it is not looking. A plan of collaboration was adopted under a Cambridge historian, which suggests that the busy spirit of the late Lord Acton still walks King's Parade ; and publication was commenced of an impressive work designed to capture for posterity the elusive spirit of the Hotel Majestic. The statement is all pitched a little in the tone of those anæmic and logical memoranda which are produced by

by official subordinates in order to embody the unanswerable reasons for the hasty and illogical decisions which their chiefs have already taken. But it is to be feared that the historians of the future, in their light-minded way, will want to be told considerably more of how the men looked and talked and sounded who ended the war. One cannot imagine that a work compiled in the year 1821 on similar lines would be of great assistance to historians of the Peace of Vienna. What one wants from contemporaries is not their opinions or even their history but their *Choses Vues*; and that is precisely what these distinguished persons do not give us. They have made a gallant attempt at an impossible task, because one cannot write the history of 1919 in 1921. Their enterprise, since they are witnesses of real value, may be regretted, and one trusts that before their memories are overlaid with the *facetiæ* of post-war

post-war Common-rooms, they will write down (for the wicked enjoyment of contemporaries and the instruction of posterity) what they really saw and did in the Great Peace. It will be easier to write, and it will certainly be easier to read.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LONG ROBE

THERE is a strange slope in London which lies between Fleet-street, where reputations mostly begin, and the river, where they so frequently end. Sheltered from the importunate incursions of clients and their cabmen by an unrivalled complication of alleys, and concealing beneath an exterior of mild domesticity the civic grandeur of its national function, it contains at least two creditable specimens of public architecture, a number of highly voracious pigeons,

pigeons, and the high-priests of the oldest and most mysterious of contemporary cults. The Temple, so admirably named, from its dual connotation of mystery and sacrifice, is the central shrine of British law. An imitation Gothic fortress across the road contains its official residence. There are branch establishments in simpler styles in the back streets of every town in the kingdom. But the true temple of the law, the Mecca of our jurisprudence towards which every practising solicitor inclines himself (first removing his pince-nez) at the hour of the polishing of the brass plate, is to be found, by that odd combination of accident and tradition which is the parent of British institutions, in

> " The little lanes, the little courts,
> The little church without a steeple,"

which, as the nameless poet observed,

> " Are all the favourite resorts
> Of most extraordinary people."

One

One may add, at whatever risk of judicial displeasure, that their peculiarity runs in most cases a uniform course. Those stern-eyed men who flit about the Temple with mouths drawn down slightly at the corners are vowed to a high calling. The Middle Ages would have termed it a mystery; and since they set an equal value upon mediæval atmosphere and the restriction of lay competition, they have done their very best to make a mystery of it. The pellucid principles of the English law are intoned by its devotees in a jargon which acolytes can only repeat by rote and even adepts can barely understand. The "simple little rules and few" laid down by His Majesty for the guidance of suitors desiring access to his Courts are annually printed in volumes whose specific gravity and cubic content astonish those who, as in Dublin recently, seek impulsively to shoot a rifle-bullet through the thin-paper edition. At

At infrequent intervals some portion of the law is codified, as a concession to vulgar clamour. This process, which commands the unvarying approval of the profession, involves the restatement of legal rules and principles in a measure which normally exceeds in length an intelligent judgment dealing with the same subject, while remaining infinitely inferior both in lucidity and arrangement. But it abounds to the quiet satisfaction of a deserving and ingenious class, in the most exciting possibilities of misinterpretation. This mass of exquisite misunderstandings is termed "case-law," and is believed by British practitioners to be the Ark of English jurisprudence and the envy of foreign lawyers, whose frequent flattery is rarely expressed in the sincerer terms of imitation. Helped out by the legislative by-products of a distracted Parliament, it constitutes the law of England, and is administered daily

daily in small doses by harassed gentlemen in large, brownish rooms, where the indifference of the ventilation is only rivalled by the inferiority of the acoustics. Its simple principles (for they are simple) are laboriously concealed from the prying laity by the careful adoption of an impenetrable terminology. At its best the lawyers' English is a convenient shorthand for the summary statement of complicated matters. But at its worst (and the worst is more often uppermost in human matters) it is a pompous and deliberate mystification, a more impressive variant of the *Ol: menth: pip:* with which the physician bewilders his patients (and, not infrequently, the chemist). That terminology constitutes the mystery of the lawyers' craft; and it is the long effort to make and keep a mystery of it that hardens those steely eyes, draws down the corners of those mouths, and weighs heavily on those preoccupied feet that

that pace so gravely, towards lunch-time, across the sunshine in the Temple.

The mystery is expounded in the hearing (though beyond the comprehension) of the people by the ranked hierarchy of the British judicature. The same ritual murmur runs from the Lord Chancellor on his Woolsack to the most inattentive local Justice of the Peace that ever uttered an inaccurate version of what he thought he heard his Clerk whisper to him. A hierophant sometimes steps outside the shrine and, at some risk of excommunication, seeks to describe the sanctified confusion, the darkness, the interesting aisles inside. Such attempts may seem to run counter to the whole tendency of the Trade Union spirit of the law, of that Guild-separatism which sets Mr. G. D. H. Cole's head nodding in time to Lord Halsbury's, and finds Lord Birkenhead speaking the same language as Mr. Clynes.

A heroic expositor once set out to make the attempt, to profane the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, to rend, so to say, the veil of the Temple, and to render the system comprehensible, as he bravely said, to "the sixth form boy, the undergraduate, the new J.P." Life holds no mysteries for the undergraduate. But the schoolboy—even Macaulay's schoolboy, who knew so much—perhaps even Miss Rose Macaulay's, who knows still more—may be pardoned a momentary flicker of bewilderment as his learned friend twitches aside the curtain from the solemn edifice of British judicature.

It was a brave attempt to map a wood whose trees are more usually studied one at a time. Once in a century or so a lawyer is discovered who can write English. In the first shock of the discovery he is apt to desert the Temple and to write *Bab Ballads* or *Dolly Dialogues*. But if he

he can be persuaded to write law, the result is a sudden flash of light on the dark summits of our legal system, a rift in the smoking mist that clings round the climber, and a glimpse of the great, orderly country of the law laid out below, before the clouds close in again. "Every man," someone annually exclaims in an unprofessional outburst, "every man his own lawyer." But the time is not yet; and perhaps it is not such a bad thing either.

MINISTERS OF STATE

Any stigma, as the old saying is, will serve to beat a dogma. The unpopularity of received opinions renders it almost cowardly to disprove them, and one hates to hit a platitude when it is down. But there are instances in which the exposure of popular errors is something more than an arrogant exercise worthy to amuse the expansive leisure of Sir Thomas Browne and may even be a source of positive instruction. One remembers the case of the

the statesmen. There was a class of persons to whom public opinion, deluded by their solemn exterior, ascribed the most dazzling range of qualities, and acquiesced, consequently, in their assuming a complete control of public affairs. They stood about in attitudes that looked well in marble trousers on a monument; and their gifts, which consisted mainly in a knack of thinking about nothing and looking all the time as if they were thinking about something else, were invariably referred to in tones of more than obituary veneration. They acquired a dangerous monopoly of international relations in the days before the war had demonstrated quite how dangerous that monopoly was; and the solemn mystery of diplomacy was entrusted to their absent-minded charge. The popular error about them was extremely simple. It was universally believed in Europe, prior to the year 1914, that above

above their admirable (or, as their favourite authors wrote, immaculate) neckwear and behind their rather glassy stare they united in some overcrowded brain-cell the two qualities which the heroes of Mr. Seton Merriman had taught the world to respect. Strength, it was thought, and silence were the essential ingredients in the statesman's make-up. Other elements might be thrown in—Celtic fervour, Latin logic, Teutonic thoroughness. But these were mere private idiosyncrasies. The essence of statesmanship (one is thinking of the qualities which steered the world firmly into the *impasse* of August, 1914) was believed to be the silent strength of the great hills—of Welsh hills sometimes, or the grey Cevennes, or the Harz, or even (if one is to be quite neutral about it) of the Matterhorn. One saw them as tight-lipped men, a little grey about the temples, who read confidential documents without

a word, flung them (for greater secrecy) into bright red boxes, and snapped down the lids with a sympathetic click from a prognathous profile. They were all (how faded the vision seems) as silent as the circulation manager of a failing newspaper, as reserved as royal seats at a charity matinée. That, in bold outline, was the popular conception of statesmanship in its great days. And then, with the malicious suddenness of a conjurer among rabbits, the war waved a wand over them, and they came out quite different.

One has suffered agonies of exasperation from the current doctrine that the war altered everything. It is a great saving in historical research ; but those of us who trail the cloudy, if glorious, appendage of a pre-war education are reluctant to discard the entire contents of our *cerebella* in favour of the miscellaneous and divergent speculations which appear to have usurped the

the place of knowledge since the battle-flags were furled and the ear-drum throbs no longer with the syncopated eloquence of our national leaders in time of war. Yet there is no use in denying it : something very odd has come over the statesmen. The war seems to have affected them in much the same way as Prince Charming took the Sleeping Beauty. They came to. Their icy reserve melted like the snow in spring-time ; and as they dropped suddenly out of those angular poses which had earned them the awe of generations, those frozen lips began to speak. And they have not, at the moment of writing, left off.

The orgy of self-revelation, which has set every minister in Europe babbling confidences with the easy flow of a school-girl in a moment of expansion, was a progressive business. The spate did not start all at once. In the earlier stages there was a staid trickle of confessions, cast mostly

mostly in the decorous form of official publications. Great Britain started it with the pale gleam of a White Paper. Then France weighed in with a Yellow Book. The Russians turned out something tasty in orange ; Belgium was discreetly grey (so like a neutral) ; the Austrians went in for red ; and soon all the primary colours in the spectroscope were exhausted by the original belligerents, and late-comers were driven out into the more garish creations of aniline research. The tone of these early revelations was almost uniformly sober. The utmost that was confided to the public was an impressive spectacle of a number of slightly flustered gentlemen engaged in exchanging solemn documents couched in a jargon which the usage of centuries had deprived of all meaning. It was all a little like the drivers of two converging trains upon a single line absorbed in an exchange of courtesies, of estimates

estimates of distance and weight of impact ; and none of the passengers had (in the official correspondence) the indelicacy to tamper with the communication-cord. That was the first stage of the international disclosures.

The next movement was a trifle livelier. Towards the end of the war, and increasingly as the Great Peace grew in intensity, the statesmen of the Old World united in a chorus of confessions. The shrill utterance of men who had won the war united with the more guttural speech of those who had caused it, and our ears were assailed by sonorous repetitions of the same thing in different keys. It was all a little like the culminating moments of the Handel Festival. From the angle of the British listener much of it was a shade tame, because we have not yet been privileged to overhear any considerable body of the confessions of our own masters. This country,

country, almost alone in Europe and with that mysterious tolerance to which most British institutions owe their survival, continued for years after the Armistice to employ the official services of those who had conducted its affairs during the war. The results, however, becoming apparent, an ampler leisure was politely afforded to some of the more remarkable actors in which to record their experiences on the stage.

Meanwhile, the *amateur* of revelations subsists principally upon foreign importations. These are generally couched in that grey medium of language which is adopted by the translator, and under this drab disguise one has some difficulty in distinguishing between the utterances of Russian generals and German statesmen. The transformation is least devastating in its consequences when the author of the original is a diplomat by profession, since his

his professional aptitude for meaningless expressions finds an adequate equivalent in the tepid formulæ of the translator. One often fails to catch the vigorous utterance of a foreign politician in his mild English garb. But the true diplomatist is excellently reflected. There is a Prussian Excellency who opened with a revealing account of the German Emperor's excursion to Morocco in 1905. The sudden regrets of Imperial Majesty on hearing for the first time at Lisbon that the streets of Tangier were hardly adapted to driving, the horrible off-shore tossing which makes that port a bitter memory to landsmen, the Imperial charger almost declining on the quay to permit Majesty to mount in the unaccustomed disguise of a white helmet, compose an engaging picture. And memory, as politicians say, will not willingly let die the spectacle of Kühlmann climbing in-board on a rope ladder " covered with spray

spray and in the full uniform of the Bamberg Uhlans." There is a queer scene at the Mansion House during an Imperial visit, in which Sir Edward Grey, sitting at table with his German colleague, was so struck by the Emperor's peroration that " we promised one another, shaking hands warmly, to do all in our power to act in the spirit of the Kaiser's speech." The gesture, no doubt, is authentic ; but one cannot help thinking that the initiative must have come from his more impulsive Continental neighbour. The harvest of diplomats is often remarkably light. But one is glad to have them ; and once more, as one reads them, one falls back into admiration of the simple-minded romanticism of a generation which left statesmanship to statesmen, and lost ten millions of men in the process.

A COLONEL

It must be more than fifty years since the mocking voice of Mr. Matthew Arnold confounded the Victorians by ingeminating, as a sort of refrain in proof of the wretchedness of society, *Wragg is in custody*. The pert inconsequence of the trick has a certain schoolboy effectiveness, and there is something in its very rudeness, in its genteel adumbration of a "Come off it" or a "Garn," which must commend it to a less elegant later age.

One

One is singularly tempted to apply the method to a modern diarist whose brilliance combines in a remarkable degree the military wisdom of Clausewitz with the social ideals of Mr. Stephen McKenna. Colonel Repington introduces himself with the roguish intimation that his best things have " been omitted on the recommendation of eminent counsel "—happy counsel ! —and proceeds to answer with unlimited gusto the old, old question as to what *he* did in the Great War. Being a soldier of recognised ability, he was not employed in any military capacity, but was retained in London to direct the operations on all fronts in the columns of the *Times*. His revelations are titillating ; his daily appreciations of the slowly broadening, deepening, thickening, blackening situation are full of interest ; but one feels that posterity and its historians will value his diary less for its revelations (they will know the facts) or

or for its judgments (they will know the truth) than for his contribution to the social history of England in war-time. He is perpetually lunching with a few people at the Ritz, dining with a few people at the Berkeley ; he sees Lady Diana Manners' last appearance in her hospital clothes (they " suited her so well ; she is very sad about it "), he hears " Lady Randolph in great form, and most bitter against Lord K." One gets through it all the queer impression that one is watching an earthquake from a seat in a cabaret : the singers grimace and the flat piano tinkles as the great buildings go crashing down outside and the smoke goes up and the flames beneath it and the cries ; but one can still hear the piano playing stale rag-time.

That is where Colonel Repington almost provokes one to set the war to a refrain in the manner of Mr. Matthew Arnold and his

his incarcerated Miss Wragg. A man pulled a Browning pistol on an Archduke, and Europe fell in on itself. *But Lady Milly was in splendid form.* Three nations reeled fighting across France and young men were taken in ships to die on beaches in Turkey ; the lights of great cities were turned low, because the world was mad. *But Lady Milly was in splendid form.* Neuve Chapelle, Loos, Gallipoli, Kut, the Somme. *But Lady Milly* . . . That is how it strikes one. Colonel Repington has unintentionally etched his background with an acid that is more biting than his design. Because it is the acid of bitter truth.

This ingenuous diarist is perpetually taking us behind the scenes of the world's tragedy, and the visit to the *coulisses* is fascinating to the last degree. One sees the *coryphées* making up their dazzling appearance behind the footlights ("Winston gave

gave me bits of the sort of remarks he would make on the points—very good and penetrating and clever, with some fine language. I was told that he has sat up until 4 a.m. with Garvin before his Navy speech. This accounts for the mess he made of it"). The scene-shifters mutter as they elbow their way by ("We discussed Max Aitken's peerage. Max had said he was sure there was something coming, for he had cut himself shaving in the morning and his blood had been blue"). And sometimes, as one stands with Colonel Repington in the wings, one can catch a word flung by a *diva* to her dresser which explains more than all her divine *roulades*: "R."—Sir William Robertson—"says that L. G. wants a victory quickly, a victory while you wait. He does not care where. Somewhere where opinion will be impressed, like Damascus. R. has told him that Damascus may come in time, when

rail

rail and pipe lines are laid, and meantime what about Beersheba? L. G. didn't fancy that Beersheba would catch on, but Jerusalem might! This is War Cabinet strategy at the close of 1916, and if we can win on it we can win on anything." That is how they were talking behind the scenes and round the prompter's desk, while the poor simple souls packed in the crowded, darkened house in front were cheering and hoping and praying —and some of them even working and dying.

But the collection of anecdotes is as barren a business as the juxtaposition of amusing *bric-à-brac*, except when it illustrates the temper of our masters. There is a glimpse of Mr. Lloyd George that is well worth remembering :

> He asked me whether there was any single military book published before the war which I found worth reading. I said, " The Book of Joshua

Joshua and Clausewitz." "And Clausewitz is *only* principles," added L. G.

The italic is not Mr. George's.

An atmosphere of broader farce is created by a conversation with Marshal Foch—until one remembers that he is not an honoured effigy in the War Museum but an active counsellor in the affairs of Europe :

> At the close of one day which I spent with him in 1914, he took me into his sanctum, and having shut the door, said, in a most impressive way, that there was one subject upon which he sincerely desired my opinion. . . . I wondered what it could be. He took up a map of northern Europe, spread it out and asked me solemnly how much European territory we should expect for ourselves at the end of the war.

In a conversation with Francis I., with Frederick the Great or Napoleon this enquiry would have had its humour. But in the mouth of Marshal Foch it is too rich for

for laughter, because Marshal Foch is still alive. One does not wonder when he complains in 1919: "President Wilson leads the Conference and does what he likes. I may not have my Rhine frontier because it is against Wilson's fine principles, and so when war comes again"—one admires the fine, downright certainty of it—"we shall have fine principles in place of a natural frontier." Observers had always suspected that Marshal Foch regarded the war as a simple episode in the history of France; but the certainty is somehow a trifle disquieting.

On the impersonal side the diary is an equally valuable record of the war. The Colonel had rotated for years in what are called "well-informed circles," and he had written on military subjects with an intelligence to which they are rarely treated, so that one is not surprised to find real insight in the thumb-nail appreciations of the

the changing situation which he entered in his journal. They show very clearly how the war looked, at every hour of it, from the angle of Whitehall. For Colonel Repington is pre-eminently a War Office soldier of the most brilliant type. That is perhaps why he finds little room for praise of Lord Kitchener.

His intimacy with the military *beau monde* enables one to get a unique glimpse at the temper of the British higher command. One is perpetually elbowed, as one follows him into the Holy of Holies, by a succession of genial gentlemen with nicknames. There is "Fatty" Wilson, and "Scatters" Wilson, and "Bockus" Nicol, and "Putty," and "Rawly." One seems to get the key-note of it all when the diarist adjures Sir William Robertson to "let Archie invade Palestine." It is quite a comfort when one remembers the uprooting of humbler persons to see the cosy *bonhomie* of

of high quarters. And Colonel Repington would not change it for worlds, even when a casualty list showed that some thoroughly good fellow had not quite come up to the expectations of his friends : " I cannot get to hear yet whether there are any more generals who have been kicked out, besides X., Y., and Z. I hope there are no more : it is not at all satisfactory." And it was not.

There are moments when one wonders whether Colonel Repington was living in reality or in an early story by Mr. Kipling. Whole pages of his brilliant record are little more than cumulative evidence that the perspicacious Mr. Britling had seen through it when he grumbled about the military clique :

> The army had been a thing aloof, for a special end. It had developed all the characteristics of a caste. It had very high standards along the lines of its specialisation, but it was inadaptable

inadaptable and conservative. Its exclusiveness was not so much a deliberate culture as a consequence of its detached function. . . . It saw the great unofficial civilian world as something vague, something unsympathetic, something possibly antagonistic, which it comforted itself by snubbing when it dared and tricking when it could, something that projected members of Parliament towards it and was stingy about money.

Whilst Mr. Wells was writing that in 1916, Colonel Repington was restating it night after night in the social entries of his diary.

It is on the social side that his book will live, if posterity knows its business. One would give whole books of Polybius for one good picture of a little dinner at Carthage in the Second Punic War. The talk in the Saracen tents during the First Crusade, a political hostess's diary in the Hundred Years' War, Parisian gossip when the

the *Grande Armée* was in the field, these would be the original sources of true history for which no amount of despatches, *documents pour servir*, and military biographies are a substitute. Colonel Repington's diary will perform that inestimable service for the historian of the future. "The only visible signs of war," he wrote on a Sunday in 1917, "are that the men now wear usually short coats and black ties in the evenings, that dinners are shorter, and that servants are fewer and less good." Those corner tables at Claridge's, that charity matinée at the Alhambra, what the lovely lady said to the statesman, how the pretty widow looked in her weeds, these and these are the materials which Colonel Repington pours into the lap of history with the happiest disregard of solemnity, discretion—and the war.

A SOLICITOR

We live (it is the delight of publishers) in the age of the confessional. A simpler generation murmured its shortcomings through a grating into the ear of its spiritual director. But this elementary machinery proved grossly insufficient for the more complex needs of the modern world, and we have lately improved it out of all knowledge. With the assistance of the arts of stenography, printing, and advertisement, our contemporaries—or at least those of

of them whose voices can stand the strain —roar their peccadilloes to the four quarters of the sky. Their secret sorrows become public delights ; it is the klaxon rather than the curfew tolls the knell of their parting day ; and their souls are laid bare on all the railway-bookstalls, due provision being made in an American edition for the simpler appetites of a younger nation.

Now the trouble began, as it mostly does, on the Continent. A young lady of Russian extraction, in the enjoyment of poor health, became a posthumous best-seller. Within a few years the elegant attention of Mr. Max Beerbohm was drawn to "a seemingly inexhaustible supply of anguished souls from the Continent—infantile, wide-eyed Slavs, Titan Teutons, greatly blighted Scandinavians, all of them different, but all of them raving in one common darkness, and with one common gesture plucking out their vitals for exportation"

portation." Then the idea began to catch on in these islands, and one might almost have suspected that the national hero was Edward the Confessor, as a great portion of English literature swiftly became a mere autopsy on eminent persons conducted by themselves. We were told in a dozen tones what it was like to be a successful novelist, an incurable invalid, or an invincible prize-fighter. We have been given a mild foretaste of the joys of posterity in discovering how it feels to be the *Times* Military Correspondent or to marry a Prime Minister. And here, at the end of the long, confessing line of great ladies and dapper gentlemen, comes the trim, professional figure of our solicitor with a bag full of secrets and a cold blue eye. Yielding to the common impulse, he too—like the ladies and the gentlemen and the geniuses—hurls himself at our knees and confesses all.

The

The solicitor, as one meets him in his moment of expansion, is a vastly different fellow from the calm figure which generally sits between us and the light on the far side of that large desk in Bedford Row or Ely Place. There, with clerks and telephones responsive to his call and all the hounds of Justice crouching in his leash, he is remote and omnipotent, like the Absolute, whilst one sits in an uncomfortable chair making vague gestures of propitiation towards him and endeavouring to impress him with the intolerable burden of our wrongs (if we are members of the public) or with the staggering brilliance of our abilities (if we are members of the Bar).

But he beams at us in his confessions with a far milder eye. One finds that his clerks paint in water-colour. We learn (it is a human touch) that he cannot get on with his partner. The tight lips relax into a human smile, the piercing gaze is clouded with

with pity of the unhappy client, and the stern votary of an apparently imbecile and implacable procedure reveals beneath his armour a sense of social service. One had never suspected in one's solicitor the mentality of the district visitor ; but there it is. No young man, he says, will be happy in the profession " without what Catholics call a sense of vocation—a desire to serve other human beings—or what has been defined as ' the religion of pity.' " One can imagine the incredulous snorts with which that claim will be received in those darkened homes of England where lawyers are regarded as the unclean instruments appointed by Providence for compassing the acquittal of guilty persons.

He ushers ladies into the profession with the somewhat chilling courtesy of his observation that " clearly both branches of the law offer as excellent an opening for the same type of celibate woman with exceptional

exceptional talent as any other profession." One figures the anxious parent of the future holding in one hand Messrs. ——'s letter as to the cost of making a young lady into an articled clerk, whilst he gazes dubiously at his daughter in the hope of ascertaining whether she is likely to turn out to be a celibate of exceptional talent.

Our solicitor manifestly listens unconcerned to the swish of petticoats in Chancery Lane. "There can be no doubt," he admits thoughtfully, "that at least one per cent. of women are quite as intelligent as any man." One sees now why he preferred to remain anonymous.

If he has a bee in his singularly judicious bonnet, it is the big, big B of Bureaucracy. Whilst he floods the lawyer with a mild light of benevolence, he denounces at every turn that encroaching, sinister figure, the bureaucrat. And yet the public servant at his best has as much of that public spirit which

which he claims for lawyers as any solicitor that ever proved a will. But perhaps this onslaught is the most human touch of all. Even our solicitor cannot understand his Income Tax return, and hates the man who sent it. Now the whole world is kin.

The solicitor does well to state so gallantly the claims of his profession. If the solicitors of England were to take ship to-morrow for the Islands of the Blest, this happy kingdom would revert in a fortnight to the social economy of the *kraal*. Orphans would go weeping and uncared for; wills would litter the waste-paper baskets of wicked uncles; trustees would run amok into mining shares; rights of way would be infringed by grasping landlords; and ancient lights would be snuffed out by speculative builders. Our solicitors are the frail barrier which we have erected (at a trifling cost) between civilisation and the jungle.

AN ARCHBISHOP

It is not often that a retiring Archbishop is shot against a wall. There are some clergymen who might welcome such an end as a legitimate form of publicity. But Georges Darboy hated notoriety, and his end was as unfitting as events in revolutions generally are. He had made a career in the French Church under the Second Empire; but the Commune of Paris was not thinking particularly of the Empire when it imprisoned him at Mazas and

and shot him at La Roquette. Napoleon III. was almost forgotten when the Commune came down from Montmartre upon the city, and Darboy was not shot as a punishment for his political past, but simply for the unhappy accident which had made of this provincial priest an Archbishop of Paris and a hostage of the Commune. The shooting of Jecker was by some reasoning a legitimate revenge ; that banker was thought to have lured the Empire into the questionable adventure of Mexico. But the execution of Darboy was entirely meaningless. Political "frightfulness" formed no part of the original programme of the Commune, and the martyrdom of an Archbishop could serve no cause but his own. He was destroyed by the Commune, which had no need of his destruction : it was as pointless as pigeon-shooting.

French Bishops are generally interesting, possibly

possibly because they live in an anti-clerical country. Like most French Churchmen, Darboy was a provincial; he was born in a village upon the plateau of Langres twelve months before the rulers of Central Europe made (and kept) their famous *rendezvous* on that height for the destruction of Napoleon; and he was a peaceful Abbé in the eastern provinces when the Emperor's nephew made his escape from the fortress of Ham and returned to London to take up his duties as a special constable. But by the time that Louis Napoleon had abandoned the constabulary for the Presidency of the Republic, Darboy was a popular preacher in Paris. His popularity even survived a fatuous observation with regard to Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, that "it is impossible to define what they mean on all occasions, or the force of the words in the mouth of some parties." Under the Second Republic

Republic Darboy became something of a pamphleteer. His Archbishop was shot in a Parisian *journée* ; and when Sibour came from Digne to Paris, Darboy became his Vicar-General. Once again the Archbishop of Paris was the victim of violence, when Sibour was stabbed by a priest. Darboy became Bishop of Nancy and returned to the east of France. But for once an Archbishop of Paris died in his bed, and it was for Darboy, who succeeded him in 1863, to return to the tradition of violence.

The See of Paris under the later Empire was an instructive field for an intelligent Churchman. Religion in France received the official support of a national establishment, but it was confronted by the old anti-religious fervour of the Revolution and the new anti-clericalism of science working in an educated and increasingly industrial population ; and the larger world of

of Catholicism outside France was convulsed by the policy of Pius IX., which did little to make life simpler for a Gallican Archbishop of Paris. His biographer strove gallantly to remind us by scraps of French that the scene was laid in France. He even observed, a shade unkindly, that Darboy "was always the pièce de resistance of a large circle." But when he speaks of a lady's "picadillos," he creates a grave doubt as to whether he means a small variety of bull-fighter or a central part of London.

With the year 1867 Darboy seems to have become something of a gloomy dean; his sense of the wrath to come exasperated some of his contemporaries, and it was a bitter justification of his foresight that when it came it involved himself. The Archbishop of Paris did not follow the Government in any of its migrations. In the siege of Paris he did not become

Archbishop

Archbishop of Bordeaux, and in the Commune he did not retire to a suburban see at Versailles. It resulted that he became a hostage of the Communards, and when the Commune shot its hostages, it shot Darboy.

A GRAND DUCHESS

WASHED (in the pleasing metaphor of geographers) by no less than two rivers, and supported, as one had always believed, by the subsidies of a wealthy firm of stamp dealers and the publishers of the *Almanach de Gotha*, the city of Luxemburg maintains with becoming modesty the establishments of a Grand Duchy and an army of three hundred men. In its streets, which are undulating and not without dignity, one feels curiously free from the oppressive air

air exhaled by great Governments. An exuberant person who succumbs in Piccadilly to his sense of exhilaration has the disquieting certainty that his conduct will be instantly resented by forty-five million persons, and that their objections will be promptly crystallised in a massive and familiar form. But the happy traveller who is impelled by his holiday sense to take into his confidence (*falsetto*) the Grand' Rue at Luxemburg must be cheerfully aware that it is at most a family offence somewhat akin to whistling in the drawing-room, and that even if a policeman comes, he will only be a small policeman.

Its engaging littleness exercises a charm familiar to all classes of collectors, and it is in the temper which drives men to the study of Japanese ivories or of the precise quantities of devotional literature that can be conveniently inscribed on small silver coins that many travellers have alighted expectantly

expectantly at the Grand Ducal capital. Indeed, if they are seriously in search of the sensation which Luxemburg can give them, they generally take it on the way from Andorra to San Marino, between which States it is conveniently situated. It has a little capital, a little monarchy, a little national anthem (doubtless sung *diminuendo* in a setting for still, small voices), and—for little people are always the most modish—some little revolutions.

An accomplished lady once appeared in the character of its little Gibbon and introduced her small charge to the reader in the latest of its exploits, when Luxemburg played a child's part in the huge tragedy of 1914. One could hardly praise an historical arrangement which appeared to take a trifle too literally the injunction that the last shall be first, and one might well have waited for an epilogue to hear about the German invasion. Indeed, it might

might have been better for some of us if she had compelled us to do so, because the current impression that history began towards the end of July, 1914, is a popular error that is still waiting for its Sir Thomas Browne : Germany is suffering to-day for a similar misbelief that the world was created in the hot weather of 1870.

But apart from this error in arrangement the story was full of interest. The German proclamation with which the Coblenz command justified the invasion is mildly entertaining : " Since France, disregarding Luxemburg's neutrality, has opened hostilities from the Luxemburg side against German troops, His Majesty, under the bitter force of iron necessity, has commanded that German troops in the first line of the 8th Army Corps should enter Luxemburg." His Majesty was admirably responsive to the stimulus, and the result was an invasion which, so far as the Luxemburgers

Luxemburgers were concerned, was rather mild-mannered, but was none the less a violation of international decency resulting in the control of the Grand Duchy by foreigners for a period of four years, at the end of which the Grand Duchess stood with General Pershing on her balcony to watch (as her loyal hotel-proprietors had so often watched before) the Americans go by. They went, with a dry humour that is not unusual in the American temperament, in the direction of Coblenz: perhaps they too were reacting to the bitter force of iron necessity.

The historian of Luxemburg appears to present the history of Europe in miniature; she is for ever holding up the wrong end of the telescope to history. There is a tiny working model of the Great War seen from the angle of the Duchy; there are faint noises, like a stage crowd on a gramophone, that are believed to represent the distant

distant reverberations of the French Revolution *in petto*; and there is a diminutive version of the trumpets and trophies of the First Empire. The historian seems to tilt her little Grand Duchy to one's ear like a tiny sea-shell in which one may catch faintly the echo of the European surges.

When Belgium flared up in its queer, reactionary revolution against the dangerously reforming tendencies of the House of Hapsburg (it is a sin for which subsequent occupants of that throne have made ample atonement), Luxemburg strained its manpower to the utmost by raising two thousand men for Joseph II. Four years later an outlying army of the French Republic threw the Austrians out of the last corner of the Ardennes, and Luxemburg entered the orbit of the Revolution. The little province was dragged unresisting in the wake of the First Empire; with the rest of Europe it lay passive on the green

operating

operating table at Vienna in 1815; and not until late in the last century did it rise to the dignity of possessing a problem of its own. The question of Luxemburg, with which Napoleon III. mystified the clubmen of 1867, was caused by a half-hearted attempt to retrieve by a success of some kind the losses which France appeared to have suffered by the gains of Prussia in 1866. For a few weeks there was a scurry of excitement. Prussian engineers worked by the light of flares on Vauban's fortifications, and anxious diplomats looked up Luxemburg on the map. But the storm died down, and the little Duchy faded back once more into the mild felicity of Gerolstein.

AN OLD MASTER

CARICATURE is one of the lost arts. So is the staining of glass. That is why there is so much of both about. Because it is an unfortunate fact that when a nation loses an art, it rarely manages to lose those who practise it. A lost art, to tell the truth, is a little like a lost dog : it strays rather miserably about in a draggled condition until some firm hand masters it, takes charge of it, and restores it to its place again.

That,

That, with the greatest possible respect to contemporary practitioners, is what had happened in a quite distressing degree to the art of caricature in England. Until the purely personal genius of Mr. Beerbohm intervened, the temple of caricature was quite phenomenally empty, and the fires were almost incredibly extinct. The wind whistled dismally through the vacant place where Gillray had once slashed and hacked at Buonaparte and Signor Pellegrini had displayed to the apprehensive readers of *Vanity Fair* a degree of irreverence towards members of the House of Lords of which only a foreigner was capable. Meanwhile, when the caricaturists of Germany and France were duly distorting, inflating, and mutilating their kings, Emperors, and statesmen, Sir Francis Carruthers Gould continued to convulse all good Liberals by drawing Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as the Mad Hatter; Sir Frank Lockwood set Benchers

Benchers tittering with the mild *facetiæ* of his professional pencil; and Mr. Punch's young men biennially depicted Britannia, in full body-armour, enquiring of a watchman, "What of the night?" It was a forlorn, and, for those patriots who looked at the contemporary productions of Paris and Munich, a profoundly humiliating period.

The dawn came in the middle Nineties, when the night seemed at its blackest. Mr. Linley Sambourne was rapidly exchanging caricature for mannerism, and "Spy" was portraying gent.'s trouserings with a steadily increasing perfection, when in the now yellowing pages of *Pick-Me-Up* a Mr. Beerbohm, of Merton, gingerly elevated in an elegant hand the torch of revolution. Mr. Raven Hill turned aside from the depiction of comic Volunteers to write an appreciative preface about him. Mr. John Lane vied with Mr. Leonard

Leonard Smithers to publish him. And, in fine, he became a classic *fin de siècle*.

"—— and then all the people cheered again, and one man, who was more excited than the rest, flung his hat high into the air, and shouted (as well as Sylvie could make out): 'Less Bread! More Maxes!'" The picture, allowing for a minor error in the final phrase, which is here corrected by the patient hand of German criticism, was strangely prophetic of contemporary conditions. Only there are not nearly enough Maxes. And perhaps the man, if it is not discourteous to Mr. Bohun Lynch to say so, flung his hat a little too high into the air.

Mr. Beerbohm's career, from its faint, lemon-tinted dawn in the *Yellow Book* to the mellow afternoon in which (it was his finest achievement in sustained irony) he elicited from the *Daily Herald* the scandalised criticism that he was in bad taste, has been

been devoted to the repression of enthusiasms. Sometimes he has repressed them with a sweeping pencil and a little water-colour, and sometimes with a meticulous prose style.

Quite, as they say, the little gentleman, Mr. Beerbohm, comes to us in book form. There is a sudden hush in the orchestra. The whirling smoke-clouds of our witches' cauldron part fashionably in the middle. And himself is seen advancing delicately down the centre of the contemporary stage, dressed quietly but, as always, elegantly in a discreet dark-blue binding. The tumult and the shoutings die, but before the Captains and the Kings have time to depart from their stalls to a more congenial atmosphere of syncopated disturbance, Mr. Beerbohm speaks in a level voice and with a very precise articulation.

It is his supreme merit that he is admirably exact, a carver of verbal netsukes. He

He writes always, if one may state a temperament in terms of footwear, as though he were wearing patent-leather boots a little tight for him (as such things always are) and holding in his left hand a redundant pair of gloves. It is a perfect attitude, and one may recommend it as a sound corrective for a generation whose typical prophet writes with his head in a bag in order that his disciples may read him with their feet on the fender.

Not so Mr. Beerbohm. Unblinkered (because they ruffle one's hair so), detached (because cliques are so thoroughly suburban), and disillusioned (because illusions are the privilege of the old), he parades his eternal youth, his ineluctable distinction, and that capacity for positively surgical analysis which enabled him to hold gingerly and with the silver tongs of his prose seven men, of whom he was himself the seventh.

It

It is the peculiar quality of Mr. Beerbohm that he has left large numbers of people for many years under the fond impression that they, and they only, can savour him. One can only thank him with such courtesy and reserve as he must expect from worshippers at that urbane, that elegant little shrine. *Max vobiscum !*

A FABIAN

THERE can be nothing more monotonous to its students than revolution, unless perhaps it is earthquake. Pestilence, like Cleopatra, has infinite variety; battle, like Mr. Heinz, has fifty-seven varieties; murder is a Protean pastime whose dazzling diversity has formed the delight of successive generations of readers of the Sunday papers; and sudden death is perpetually providing new thrills for coroners. Revolution alone has its prescribed course and its

its unchanging ritual ; and the peculiarly blinding type in which Mr. Shaw always impels his publishers to print his prose works holds out little hope that we shall ever persuade a proletarian dictator to read John Tanner's *Revolutionist's Handbook* and so to introduce a new notion or so into the revolutionary's repertoire.

One invariably opens a revolution with the riot. It may be a bread-riot, like the march of the women to Versailles, or a no-bread-riot, like the other feminine invention of the hunger-strike. But whether it is the invasion of a parliament, like the September revolution of 1870, or the storm of a disused lunatic asylum, like the fall of the Bastille, or even a riot conducted by the monarch himself, like the burglarious entry of Charles I. into the House of Commons, the first act of the revolution is always a crowded and popular business, faintly resembling the stage

stage of His Majesty's Theatre during a production by Sir Herbert Tree.

Then, as the cheers subside, the soldiers fraternise with the mob; the licensed victuallers take down their shutters; and the Three Days of July or the Five Days of February are an accomplished fact.

Far, far less entertaining is the second act of the revolution. It is the invariable practice of all revolutions played under Queensberry rules that a National Assembly should immediately meet and draft the constitution. All the neglected political writers of the last decade are hastily elected in order that they may recite to one another all their rejected contributions to the periodicals of the late *régime*. They formulate the Rights of Man. They set out on the long journey back to first principles; although happily most of them rarely get further than a synopsis of the works of Rousseau. And so the bright streams

streams of revolutionary ardour wander uncertainly in the desert, until they are choked among the sands of the constitutional debates. It is the dreariest phase of any revolution, and its contemporaries are at a disadvantage compared with the historical student in that they cannot skip it.

That is why one owes to Mr. and Mrs. Webb a double (or perhaps one should say, in addressing this familiar dual personality, a quadruple) debt of gratitude for anticipating by a few years the constitution-making of the English Revolution and getting us successfully past it. Now we can go straight on to the Terror.

The reconstruction of the British machine by two of the best-informed students of its working is a singularly fascinating study. It is a great, if one accepts Mr. Arnold Bennett's epithet, or a dark, if one prefers Mr. Asquith's, adventure: and no one can

can walk round the walls of their Utopia without a drastic examination of his own constitutional ideas and a thorough inspection of the machinery of government.

Briefly, Mr. and Mrs. Webb, confronted by Kings, Lords, and Commons, retain King, discard Lords, and cut Commons in two. The recipe sounds drastic ; but it produces a sound working constitution which our proletarian dictator may season, garnish, and serve to taste. The Monarchy is let off with a caution as to its military predilections. The Lords (except the Lords of Appeal) are sent the way of the capitalist system. But the real crux of the scheme lies in the proposed partition of the last remaining limb of Parliament. The Commons are broken up into two Parliaments—a Political Parliament and a Social Parliament. The Political house controls the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and the Interior, whilst the Social house holds

holds the purse-strings and exercises "whatever national control may from time to time be required over the nation's economic and social activities." One appreciates to the full the advantage of a constitution under which the military escapades in which Mr. Secretary Churchill had involved one house would be refused financial sanction on the motion of Mr. Chancellor Webb in Another Place. But it is in this partition of Parliament that the new constitution appears to present its most debatable point. It may increase the sum of human happiness to liberate Mr. Clynes from the necessity of listening to Lord Robert Cecil on foreign affairs and to exempt Sir Frederick Banbury from his present duty of playing audience to the domestic wrongs of Mr. Thomas. But one doubts somehow the wisdom of permitting financial (and therefore vital) decisions on Political questions to be taken by

by a lobby full of frankly uninterested and necessarily ignorant members of the Social house. One is a little shy of dual sovereignty. Devolution, whether by areas or functions, may be sound and practicable, and it is manifestly desirable to provide somewhere a more intelligent arena than exists in Parliament for the discussion of industrial and allied economic problems. A National Industrial Council is an excellent and necessary thing. But sovereignty must remain in Parliament, and sovereigns (it was the experience of at least one member of the House of Stuart) are rarely at their brightest after they have been bisected.

And so, in a happy glow of socialised industry and vocational self-government, with its dual Parliament and its docile monarchy, the Co-operative Commonwealth dawns on Western Europe. It is all very sufficiently moderate and sane and practical, and

and one only hopes that the project will be adopted by our young barbarians. For the cup which Mr. and Mrs. Webb hold to our lips with such discretion is emphatically the cup that cheers but not inebriates.

A JURIST

THE layman who staggers back from the learned publications of the Grotius Society with a stifled exclamation of "Good Grotius," has a fair excuse for his irreverence.

One had grown pretty used to pseudo-sciences at this end of time, when universities light-heartedly project Bachelors of Commerce and statistics are believed to be an end in themselves. But the study of International Law has always seemed the most

most solemn and splendid imposture of the lot. Indeed, the spectacle of a sham system of law, with its grave array of bogus commentators, and the majestic reverberation of their faked controversies afford so rare and splendid a show that one hopes nobody will ever be so heartless as to give it away. If there is anywhere (and there must be) a medal of International Law, one trusts that the pious founder expressed his grasp of the real situation by substituting on the obverse for the customary profile of Minerva the calm and non-existent features of Mrs. Harris, because it is the peculiar beauty which distinguishes International Law from her more vulgar sisters, Bigamy and Bankruptcy, that (like a sort of Cinderella in a pantomime by Mr. Henry James) there isn't any.

Indeed, it is the tragedy of most international lawyers that they pursue their elusive

elusive subject with a precision admirably suited to the capture of such grossly corporeal game as the Sale of Goods Act, when its faint and fading degrees of non-existence would have defied the grasp of the most prehensile metaphors ever evoked by the brave old Genie from *The Golden Bowl*. The profession of the law has provided almost ten generations of men with a genteel intellectual amusement; but it is apparently only at the end of nineteen centuries of Christendom that Europe has succeeded, with a good deal of assistance from America, in arriving at the ripe conclusion that a condition precedent to the institution of International Law is the establishment of an international policeman.

Yet starting, as one does, with the worst will in the world towards the subject, one is free to admit that if there is not—in the police-court sense—any International Law

Law worth speaking of, there is a most respectable body of international custom. Parts of it—those, for instance, which relate to the value of guaranteed neutrality, the treatment of non-combatant persons, and the destruction of merchantmen by maritime belligerents—were principally responsible for the inception and extension of a recent war. Indeed, at this moment the axes of mankind are busy in the jungle of International Law where Sir Frederick Pollock used formerly to bay the moon, as the organised conscience of humanity struggles to substitute for that network of custom and anecdote a real international legal system with the necessary equipment of tribunals and sanctions.

If you take any problem, you will find that its international history has run a startlingly uniform course.

The history of the inland waterways of the world, to use one example, is really the

the history of every other international matter. In the earliest phase the rivers were genuinely internationalised by the Roman Empire. Then the robber baron of the Middle Ages sent out his water-bailiffs, collected his dues, and enjoyed a period of supremacy and control which he used almost entirely to the misapplication of the doctrine of private property to public things. Next, as the baron faded away to survive only in the wicked uncle of pantomime, his place was taken by the barely distinguishable robber monarchy of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries. The protest of the community, which had found earlier expression in the discreet murmurs of Grotius and Vattel, broke vigorously out into the law of Nature preached so eloquently by the French Revolution in those cases in which Nature appeared to have shown an intelligent provision of the military

military needs of the French Republic. And, finally, the Nineteenth Century lumbered conscientiously along with its Rhine and Danube Commissions, which are stumbling under our eyes into a branch of the executive of the League of Nations. The internationalisation by the League of all navigable international rivers may seem a drab termination for a picturesque subject. But it is better to tear our gaze for a moment from the pretty colours of the national flags. Europe has learnt gradually from the story of its waterways that private control of navigation is as indefensible as private smallpox. Perhaps one day it will apply the same lesson to private war.

TWO PRINCES

HISTORICAL parallels, even since Einstein, rarely meet. Our masters are frequently tempted to displays of impressive information by the faint similarity of widely separated events, and the common result is a distortion of two sets of facts and the substitution of a common denominator of falsehood in the mind of a bewildered public. The career of Napoleon I. was twisted almost beyond recognition to provide historical analogies for Napoleon III., and

and innumerable statesmen have been misrepresented in order to enable a journalist to observe, in that knowing way of his, that they went to Canossa. But one may, without being Procrustean, detect a resemblance between the two pallid boys who faded out of history when the French beheaded their King in a great square and the Russians shot their Emperor in a little room. There is the same sad flavour of predestined futility about the Dauphin and the Tsarevitch—the same lingering tenderness of the world in their early youth, succeeded by the same harsh questions of democracy when they were old enough for martyrdom, and even the same faint, haunting doubts of history as to how and when they ended.

Historians, although their style would not lead one to think so, are almost human. Those thin lips, which pay to the fall of dynasties the grudging tribute of a platitude,

tude, are sometimes twisted into a smile. Those pillars of public rectitude have little private lapses ; and that cold eye, which observes in the grinding passage of centuries little more than the material for an instructive sketch-map, lights up at home when there are sausages for tea. But there is one point at which their human weakness is permitted to stray into the frozen wilderness of their work. The most solemn historian goes down like a school-girl before a mystery. His bare study is littered with clues, and he will follow a false scent with all the activity of the meanest of God's office-boys that ever bought an evening paper for an unconfirmed confession of an undetected crime. They stare in fascination at the Man in the Iron Mask. They fill monographs with conjectural ingenuity about the *Letters of Junius*. They toy archly with exalted scandal about the Archduke Rudolph and the

the shots in the dark at Meyerling. But they assume their most mysterious air when a winter sun drops behind the great tower of the Temple in 1793 and a pale boy is half seen at a window.

There is something queer about the story. When the drums rolled in the Place de la Révolution and the drop of a sloping knife made a widow of Marie Antoinette, the boy in prison became King of France. For twelve months of his reign he was seen about the Temple. His games, his birds, his lessons, that dreadful day when he made against his mother the charges which they had taught him are all recorded. But after a day in 1794 the story is muted. No one seems to see him ; there is a queer silence in the Temple ; the princesses in the room above catch hardly a sound from the prison. Someone was there—a patient, rather stupid child who fell ill and eventually died. When he

he was dead, the doctors did queer things which made him almost unrecognisable. That is the story from which half a hundred pretenders have started, each claiming to be the Dauphin ; and when one reads it, one can hardly doubt that one of them was right.

If there is a mystery, there is only one man to solve it. The method of M. Lenôtre has been applied to countless problems of the Revolution. It is the patient, tedious, fascinating method of the police. He will leave nothing to his own imagination, and in the result his careful accumulation of detail fires his reader's. One would give all the rhapsodies of all the sentimental historians for one page of M. Lenôtre, with his vivid evocation of the scene. Other men make perorations over Marie Antoinette ; he gives one the inventory of her prison furniture, and one may finger the damask on her chairs by spending

spending a few moments in one of his footnotes. It is a method of infinite patience, and it is the ideal manner for a student of mysteries. A man may paint the story of Louis XVI. in broad, bright strokes. But one cannot follow his son into the half-darkness without a more careful guide.

The key, if there is one, lies somewhere in the politics of 1794, when the bright light of the Revolution was beginning to waver and men were looking round them for a way of escape. There was a young King of France in prison, and if some group could only put him forward, it might end the Revolution and govern in his name. Hébert and Danton had the notion. Perhaps they carried it out and took the boy away. But they died too soon. Then Robespierre had the notion : he came to the Temple, and the boy was sent to Meudon. But they brought him back

back to Paris ; perhaps he was not the King after all. Robespierre died on a summer evening, and after him Barras removed the boy from prison, and left another in his place. The boy in prison died, and they buried him. But somewhere in France the boy who had left prison in 1794 was still living.

He might return. He did, when the Revolution had died down, return in large numbers. One of him was an elegant creature who was widely believed in, and even enlisted the credulity of a Bishop. But there was a duller, heavier man who came from New Orleans in 1815. They stared at him when he landed at St. Malo, and he spoke in a yokel way. He was a baker—*le petit mitron* of the old songs of 1795—and King Louis XVIII. exhibited only the faintest enthusiasm for the discovery of his predecessor. Perhaps he was the King. He was stupid enough.

A FEW FOREIGNERS

One remembers to have seen somewhere a large cartoon in the symbolical manner. It depicted a tall young lady, whose hair was parted in the middle with the distressing severity which is the inevitable consequence of wearing classical draperies. She was stated in that inimitable little handwriting of Mr. Beerbohm's to represent the Twentieth Century pressing the English rose between the pages of History ; and one gathered from her expression (the

(the effect may have been due either to a piece of draughtsmanship or to such an accident as happens to the most eminent caricaturists) that the emblematic vegetable upon which she was engaged was faintly malodorous.

This adoption of floral symbolism for the representation of great nations is a pleasing device, and it comes to mind whenever one encounters on the continent of Europe a group of English roses (in nice, sensible blouses) engaged in extracting from a palace, a cathedral, or even, in extreme cases, from Calais Gare Maritime the peculiar savour of the French lilies. That scent is the most elusive thing in the whole range of European perfumes, and it would puzzle any spiritual analyst to lay down what precisely are its essential ingredients.

Indeed, it is probable that more incongruous things, styles, and people have been appreciatively

appreciatively described as "delightfully French" than that other crowded array of startling incompatibles, the "exquisitely Greek." The incautious Hellenist must be prepared to encounter anything from St. Pancras Church to the galumphings of strange, barefooted females. But the Gallophil knows that he must include within the range of his affections the classicists, the romantics, the realists, the Parnassians, the Symbolists, and the merely indelicate, whilst his obedient eye wanders with equal appreciation over the cathedral of Chartres, the Eiffel Tower, and the portico of the Madeleine. Because, you know, they are all *so* French.

In the outcome, one is left wondering, a little feebly, what is the period in which France remained true to herself and was at her most French. The embittered theatre-goer is apt to reply that it was in the age of M. Sardou, before the taste for the

the eight-doored room went out of domestic architecture. For some it would be the French Renaissance, that singular piece which was staged so adorably by the Châteaux of Touraine, by the peaked black towers of Chenonceaux, the great curving roofs of Chambord, and the Chapel of St. Hubert at Amboise set on the great rampart like a jewel worn on a finger. Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, who have a wider experience in these matters, would probably maintain, impressed by the ready accessibility of Versailles from Paris, that it was the age of the *Grand Monarque*. But they would be wrong; because a palace (even a Palace of Varieties) is rarely typical of a people, and the reign of Louis XIV. was far more the preponderance of a palace than the domination of a man. *Amateurs* of Versailles may mistake an intimacy with Saint-Simon for a knowledge of French history, in much the

the same manner as the connoisseur of Boswell is apt to regard his collection of anecdotic *bric-à-brac* as a working substitute for a real acquaintance with England in the Eighteenth Century. But it is in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin that, if the historical novelists are to be believed, we breathe the authentic air of France.

One may, on the whole, have worse guides to the true temper of a nation than the historical novelists. French history with them is divided quite simply into two periods. In the earlier, one perpetually watches Mr. Stanley Weyman clattering over the cobbles into Blois, as the evening mist creeps up from the Loire and curls and smokes along the high, open gallery of the Château; one hears his great boots pounding somewhere inside, as he calls for wine after a day's riding, and then the rattle and scrape of steel against steel as the Cardinal's men keep their faithful

rendezvous

rendezvous at the end of every chapter. And the second period finds one shouting oneself hoarse as Mr. Carlyle bowls over the sentries and storms the Bastille, or mounted on a raw-boned draught-horse in the fog at Valmy and watching Mr. Belloc's back, as it jolts before us into action with the guns.

To that extent, therefore, one finds, as one picks a careful way across the welter of civil war and dull poetry which make up French history under the Cardinals, that one is in the garden of the lilies. One is certainly in Corneille ; one is almost in Rostand. The scene fades as the century wears on, and the great square *façade* of Versailles shuts down like a painted scene between ourselves and France. On the narrow stage in front of it a number of ladies and gentlemen played out the elegant comedy of the Eighteenth Century, when no country was so ill-bred as

as to display its national characteristics in public. And when next that curtain rises, France is in revolution.

Now, it is only a madman whose conversation is unchanged by fever; and sane countries in revolution, like sane men in sudden illness, are unlike themselves. Possibly that is why Russia in upheaval seems much the same as Russia in repose; the only difference appears to be the transfer of all the lunatics who were latent in her fiction from private to public life. But with France and England a revolution is quite another matter. England in the revolution of 1649 or France in the revolution of 1793 have a strained eye and a quick, muttering speech that are utterly unlike their normal manner. It is only an unusual Englishman who passes his life in a sort of Old Testament charade, and one can never see typical Frenchmen in those finely gesticulating orators of the Revolution

Revolution, whose life was one long, unacknowledged quotation from Plutarch.

That is why the savour of the lilies eludes one again in the typical career of the Revolution ; perhaps it was unreasonable to expect it in the men who helped to tear them down. Yet the episode of the Girondins tells against the Parisian background of the Revolution because it was a provincial business. Almost it has the quality of a breath of French air let into that closed and heated room which was Paris before the Terror. The Girondins, whom their contemporaries called the *Bordelais*, were not drawn predominantly from the south, although Vergniaud himself sat with Guadet and Gensonné for the Gironde. But their strength was exclusively provincial, and their supporters (if that is the name for the men who left them to the headsman) were to be found in Normandy, Brittany, Picardy, Guienne, Provence,

Provence, and the Limousin. With this provincial backing they went up to Paris to challenge the revolutionary dictatorship of the Parisians. They were persons of high eloquence and extreme gentility, having a political hostess in Madame Roland and an unparalleled range of reference to the classics. But, like most provincials, they were behind the fashion; and the people of Paris, who are always exacting in these matters, could not pardon the political *modistes* who offered them in 1793 the models of 1789. So they were sent singing to the scaffold in the great square. Vergniaud, who was typical of the group, watched his friends die and quoted Plato. But having poison in his pocket and the precedent of Demosthenes before his eyes, he yet let them bind him with the others under the knife. For friendship's sake he had waved from his lips the supreme classical allusion: it was

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a sacrifice before which Sir Philip Sidney's must pale into mere selfishness.

Yet we cannot breathe the French air in all these cameos from the antique. One might as well accuse a Wedgwood and Adam drawing-room of insularity or look to hear the attenuated nudes of an allegory by Flaxman call for more beer and roar out "The Roast Beef of Old England." The Revolution was so much an affectation of antiquity; the First Empire was so nearly a political *pastiche* whose elements were contributed in equal parts by Augustus and Charlemagne; and it is not until the hungry Forties deepen into the well-nourished Fifties that we pass the gate once more into the garden of the lilies.

One may say, without begging too many questions, that three generations of Englishmen have found the threshold of France in the hall of the Gare du Nord. The French

French quality is epitomised for most of us by that combination of frivolity with rectilinear town-planning which composes the city of Paris, and it is high time we realised that Paris is in almost every particular the creation of the Second Empire. It is not the voice of the Capets or the Valois or the Bourbons that one can hear in the rise and fall of the great Parisian *concerto*. But one catches at every turn faint echoes of Offenbach, faint gleams of his Emperor's waxed moustache.

The strong note of the great avenues, which run like a *motif* through the whole city, was struck by the Baron Haussmann ; they were built as an embellishment of the Emperor's city and a convenience to his troops, because one cannot, even in street-fighting, shoot round corners. The air of *café chantant*, which breathes through the lamp-spangled trees of the Champs Élysées and wafts little ladies fur-wrapped in

in *coupés* across the Bois, is the air of Morny, of the days when the *coulisses* of the Chamber were barely distinguishable from the *coulisses* of the Opera. And the whole effect of the great roaring, gleaming, tinkling, stone-built place is in its essence and its details Napoleonic. It is not until the Bees are round the lilies that one may catch their true savour.

That is why one snatches eagerly at any relic of that real French time, when the pork-pie competed with the stove-pipe as the inspiration of hatters. The whole age is summarised with exactitude in the career of a Spanish lady of family whose mother was *Camarera mayor* to Queen Isabella; she was born in an earthquake, married an Emperor, and died in exile. One has come to think of the Empress Eugénie as the uncomplaining subject-matter of the recollections of English governesses. But she was once the leading lady of a very different piece

piece, when the world swung round Paris and Paris took its time from Compiègne.

The slow march of European education has brought the Emperor's "doctrine of nationalities" into fashion under the amiable pretence that it is the latest thing from America. But his Empire, as we are coming to learn, left more to the world than the names of a few French defeats. The modern history of Europe has its opening moves in the Sixties, and the centre of that age was a dull-eyed man who was an Emperor, but married a lady; he rode out, aching and rouged, under the Prussian gun-fire along the bare hill-sides outside Sedan, and showed the world that it had still a lesson to learn from that family of artillerists and adventurers called Bonaparte.

MEN

I

MEN OF LETTERS

The Critics
Mr. Disraeli, Poet
Mr. George Saintsbury
Dean Inge

THE CRITICS

One of the most touching things about the United States (and they are rather touching—although like most people they would infinitely prefer to appear fierce or impressive or even a trifle forbidding) is their perennial interest in the state of English letters. Over here one is a little inclined to take them for granted, to let those exquisite plants grow unconsciously —with an occasional afternoon for weeding. But that mild, inactive attitude is not nearly

nearly enterprising enough for our friends across the sea. They seem to us, as we sit back in a long chair and look at the sky through the leaves, to be perpetually busy about the garden, always trotting up and down the paths with an anxious eye and a basket full of the dangerous looking instruments of literary horticulture, stopping every minute to bend over a bed of young novelists or tie up a drooping reputation, prodding the subsoil with an enquiring fork, or taking a selection of promising young plants into their own charming conservatory to tell them (from the lecture platform) just how they are growing.

They are afflicted, in fact, with that nervous inability to enjoy things which Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer defined ever so many years ago as the Critical Attitude. One knows (or, at any rate, one has always preferred to think) that no landscape is ever enjoyed by those gifted persons who know

know the names of all the plants in it. They are far too busy murmuring *Celosia Jonesii* and *Ampelopsis hirsuta* to notice the faint line of the river through the trees and the slow drift of the cloud-shadows across the silent hills. One may leave such simple pleasures to the uninstructed observer who can hardly, poor fellow, see the trees for the wood. But while he and his uncultivated friends are gesticulating on the hilltops and generalizing a little wildly about the view, the expert passes proudly by with his trained nose kept well below the ground-level and stops every now and then to examine a moss or prod a saxifrage—

He knows about it all. *He* knows. HE knows.

And that knowledge, so patiently accumulated, is impressively communicated to the world in those little essays in criticism, those short courses in how to do it

it by which (if only they would read them) those who are rash enough to do it are periodically kept straight by those who are not.

America has not yet, so far as the torpid British perception is aware, reached the second (or graver) stage of the ailment. It is with her at present in the lighter, preliminary form ; and there is still some hope that the complaint may pass away altogether and leave her no worse than she was before. One says this because her tendency at present is merely to appreciate and estimate and value and revalue those English writers whose work reaches her : that is an early symptom. But she rarely (perhaps too rarely) tells our young people how to write. That is the final, the most exasperating stage of criticism.

The Critical Attitude, which disables a man from enjoying a book in precisely the same way that nervous hyperæsthesia disables

ables him from enjoying his life, passes in the normal case through two phases. In essence, of course, it is prompted by the barren spirit of enquiry which drives small children to extract all the works of a favourite clock-work bear; and it has been observed that bears (and novelists) who have been subjected to this searching analysis rarely function with the same freedom after the critical process. But one is less concerned with its effects on writers than with its broader and more disastrous influence on readers. The temper of criticism was once defined by the accomplished Mr. Hueffer in the striking exhortation to his countrymen: "Examine into the composition and the past history of your pill before you swallow it." Yet however salutary this injunction may be to those about to consume patent medicines, one somehow doubts its efficacy as a general guide to life. Besides, the normal

normal person is not perpetually employed in taking pills. The habit of invariably pausing with the morsel half-way to one's mouth, while its composition and antecedents are critically considered, may save a few drug-takers. But it will spoil a good many dinners. Persons afflicted with the Critical Attitude suffer from an almost total inability to enjoy a book as the simple thing that it really is. In the earlier stages of the complaint (and there, unless I am profoundly in error, so many readers are to be found) the patient's mind runs, while he is reading, on Estimates and Appreciations and Tendencies and Literary Values. He is perpetually *placing* writers, like those mental sufferers whose sole occupation is to arrange things in long lines or interminable tabulated schemes. He thinks of poets in *schools* (as though they were porpoises) or of novelists in *groups* (as though they were bulky athletic gentlemen being

being photographed after a football-match. And, above all, he never reads a book with the simple object of getting out of it just what the author put into it. But in the second (and fatal) stage the symptoms grow graver. Primary criticism is mainly a failure to enjoy things unless they are arranged in critical categories. In cases of secondary criticism the patient feels an overmastering need to tell those who do things how they should have done them. If he has relatives, they will restrain him ; but since critics are recruited almost entirely from the ranks of foundlings, they are totally unrestrained. In this phase the sufferer may be overheard muttering about Technique and Method. He scrawls " Flaubert " on people's doors and runs away. The inability to read becomes complete ; but unfortunately it is only in rare cases accompanied by a corresponding inability to write, and the written by-products

products of this distressing malady are known as Criticism.

As a continent America has not reached (and one prays to heaven that it may never reach) the second stage of this dreadful and progressive ailment. But it would seem that they are tolerably well advanced in the earlier phase. They are always *placing* our established writers. They have a vast appetite for Groups of Younger Men. And the result, if one may offer a word of mild advice, is that this view of English letters is just a shade too inclusive. We have a tolerable poet or so—although they are not at the moment particularly thick on the ground. But in their determination to observe a School of British Poetry they have included in their serious, their kindly appreciation quite a number of industrious persons whose contribution to our verse exports would never upset the balance of trade. They have got in because American taste

taste was set on having a British School, and one can hardly have a School of two. Errors of that type are apt to occur when one ceases to read and begins instead to criticise. And the same taste for criticism misleads them sometimes into solemn appreciation of quite negligible writers. It is such fun, when once one is bitten with the *tic* of criticism, to estimate, to appreciate, to revalue, to wield the solemn critical scales ; and if no Shakespeares are about to tip the beam, one pops in Mr. X. Which is all very well as an exercise in criticism and so long as one remembers that he is only Mr. X. But once a writer has been solemnly discussed, one is so apt to think quite solemnly about him. And that is bad for one's judgment—as well as very bad indeed for Mr. X.

A distaste for criticism is as natural as a distaste for medicine ; and in England we have had far too much of both lately. There

There has been a queer revival of the critical habit, a rise of critics in public estimation which has culminated in the past few years in the erection of a definite critical hierarchy. We are drifting gradually towards that critically perfect state in which it is felt to be more important to know (as Mr. Gosse does) what to say about a book than to write one, far higher in the intellectual scale to adjust the fine balances of criticism than to supply the *corpus vile* which they weigh. It is a strange, almost an alarming development. One had grown accustomed, since the death of Matthew Arnold, to see criticism left exclusively to the *amateur*, to the unbiassed judgment of some friend of the editor who wanted to get books for nothing. There was something to be said for the method, since it arrived by a rather devious route at a general, popular judgment on the works, and it eluded that professionalism which is the

the British bugbear. The editor's friend was fairly representative of the great community for which he acted as taster, and his ineptitude was a very fair measure of the ineptitude of the reading public. Somewhere on the heights above him the great critics of the past paraded their lonely figures through the mist ; and they, no doubt, in their dogmatism and their spiritual pride were the models of our young friends, the modern critics. They set out with a brave determination to give their public something more than a bare verdict on the work which they criticised. Cheese-tasters and reviewers might confine themselves to a curt, disgusted " This is bad." But a critic, they felt, was expected to give reasons for his judgment, to lay down laws, to erect standards. So they cultivated an exquisite sensibility and a broad, impressive range of allusion ; and at their best they have a stale flavour of Matthew

Matthew Arnold. But how different the method and the medium in which their instruction is conveyed to the listening spheres. The old lonely critic ingeminating woe on English letters has been replaced by lively, active little groups. The literary streets are crowded with earnest people, all called Diogenes, and each of them looking vainly for one just writer ; and the lions are considerably outnumbered by the throng of Daniels come to judgment. The shrill young voices ring out in chorus ; and the law, in these delicate critical matters, is laid down for us by a syndicated lawgiver. Worse still, the multitude of critics has produced schism ; and we have a Pope or so at Avignon fulminating critical excommunication against the Pope of Rome. There is an admirable confusion of voices, and counsel is exquisitely darkened.

There are, broadly speaking, in England at the present moment more critics than anything

anything else. They certainly outnumber the readers ; and they probably outnumber the writers, too. When a book is rash enough to appear, the writer is summoned before an overcrowded Bench ; and the judgments serve to remind one by their abundance that the law is always most fully stated by Courts with not quite enough work to do. But the situation is more serious than that : it has something of the gravity of a crop failure, when the mills are kept standing for want of raw material. The critics of England stand hollow-eyed in their doorways, waiting for work to do. But there has been boll weevil among the early poets ; the novels are all mildewed, and there is even blight among the essayists. In the full horror of the famine the critics have set to work to turn out raw material for their own mills. There was a desperate search among the rubbish-heaps of past literature. Back-numbers

numbers were ransacked for unsuspected treasure, and Old Masters were hastily fabricated from the rag and bone shop. It was a simple-minded quest, which deceived no one but the dithyrambic gentlemen who wrote prefaces for the Collected Remains of deceased, almost too deceased authors. But it made quite a vogue for an idiot poet or so ; and it gave the critics some work to do, when work was badly needed.

A sounder method, although it involved some sacrifice of critical dignity, was the confection of masterpieces by the critics themselves. To indulge in mere composition, when one was born to the higher calling of criticism, of appraisement, of knowing how it is done, might seem a grave decline. But the sacrifice was made ; the works were written ; and the critics, by turning author, got something to write about. Mr. Squire laid aside the sceptre of

of the *London Mercury*, spent a few mornings with his Muse, and became a poet again. Mr. Middleton Murry tuned his frail instrument to the coarse notes of fiction. Miss Rebecca West hung up the flail and borrowed a pen with results which made one regret that she loses so much time in reading bad novels which she might spend in writing good ones. There was a sudden burst of books by critics, and one half expected Mr. Gosse to write a sonnet. But the crisis was averted. The critics were given something to criticise, and England resumed her sleep in the shadow of their pulpits. In their truculence and their domination they are at the moment the most conspicuous, if hardly the most hopeful, feature of English letters. There has been nothing quite like it since the critics killed Keats.

MR. DISRAELI, POET

It will amuse the leisure of posterity (if we cannot live in the Eighteenth Century, let us at least try to write like it) to observe under glass, among the odder specimens of our age, the modern collector. His tastes have varied through the long course of history. So long as he confined himself to such harmless rarities as stuffed crocodiles and two-headed lambs, he remained a figure of no particular significance, without ambitions, and useful only to sorcerers engaged

engaged in furnishing their studios. But when his range lengthened and his repertory came gradually to include the whole catalogue of tangible objects, he attained a higher dignity, and he will probably be noticed by an observant posterity as one of the leading features of our time.

It is an odd, industrious little figure that goes about, in his favourite phrase, picking things up. Other ages have thrown things away; and their dust-heaps, at Tell-el-Amarna and Oxyrhynchus, are an impressive memorial, almost a mirror of their life. But the collector, scavenging indomitably in the wake of our civilisation, will leave nothing whatever for posterity to find. When we perish, his collections will perish with us, and there will be nothing left over to remember us by—not even our discarded door-knobs or our broken snuff-boxes or the gay, pictorial lids of our bloater-paste. For they are all collected

collected by someone ; our refuse-heaps will yield nothing to the excavator but dust and ashes, and even our ashes are endangered by the ingenuities of fuel experts.

If you enumerate the collector's fancies, you will find that he has opened out to include the whole field of human phenomena. Sometimes he is straightforward enough, when he abandons himself to an honest pursuit of good art and sound furniture. There is nothing morbid about a taste for Sheraton or the simpler appetite for Rembrandts which impels cultured peach-packers to raise the price of tinned fruit in order to pay their debts to an art-dealer. But more often (there is probably an unpleasant explanation which any psycho-analyst could conceal behind his detestable terminology) the collector's fancy seems to run a crooked course. There is something faintly perverted about many

many of his preferences. You will find him, in the dark corners of bookshops, buying books for their misprints. He has been seen admiring prints because of some error that remained uncorrected on the plate. The fatal lure of rarity obscures for the collector the facile charms of perfection. It is enough for him (one is back again in the era of the two-headed lamb) that the specimen is unique.

Yet there is one field of rarity that remains singularly unexplored by the collector. It happens from time to time that a man who has attained distinction in one field of achievement exercises himself in another. These exercises are normally devoid of all distinction except their author's name. But one would have expected, by all the canons of connoisseurship, that they would practise a strange fascination upon the collector. "Rafael made a century of sonnets." You would think that

that Mr. Huntington would devastate the dollar exchange by the price paid at auction for this experiment in poetry by a master of painting. "Dante once prepared to paint an angel." The preparations were probably disastrous. But one can almost picture the scene at Christies' as the thousands leap into ten-thousands and the auctioneer holds his breath, whilst eager commission-agents, in emulation of Mr. Canning, call a New World into being to redress the balances of the Old.

There is a morbid attraction about these experiments. One has felt it, to some extent, over the French verses of Frederick the Great. They are not good verses; but then Frederick was not a good king. Yet at least he was a king; and one finds in the rather halting lullaby of his interminable Alexandrines a strange, incommunicable thrill. It comes from a sudden realisation that the lips which first muttered them

them were the thin lips of the King of Prussia, that the eye which was searching the rococo ceiling for inspiration (which never, never came) was the eye which faced Europe so steadily through seven years of war. The decorous Muse of the Eighteenth Century walks more than a little stiffly through those innumerable Odes to Glory, to Prince Henry of Prussia, to War, to the Margravine of Baireuth, and to most of the primary virtues. Perhaps the Muse, poor lady, was aware that her partner in the dance was a crowned head.

Yet there is a dreadful fascination about such rarities. Napoleon once began to write a novel: it was called *Lord Essex*, and one can imagine the collectors of three continents elbowing one another in a wild attempt to bid for the tepid balderdash, because it was made by a man who could win battles. Something of the same attraction clings to the sparse writings of British statesmen,

statesmen, those stern, illiterate figures whose heavy hands make empires and Poets Laureate. A few have written prose; but hardly one of them, since Mr. Canning, has struck the lyre. Yet there was a Prime Minister once who wrote a tragedy in verse. It opens with an Advertisement which must win the sympathy of all historians: "As there is no historical authority for the events of the celebrated Ballad on which this Tragedy is founded, I have fixed upon the thirteenth century for the period of their occurrence." Many statesmen have been uncertain about their chronology. But can it be doubted that this preliminary tucket (how one begins to catch the tone of the period) was sounded by an author who signed himself Δ and concealed behind that mysterious fragment of a dead language the personality of Mr. Disraeli?

He was writing with every possible advantage.

advantage. He was beginning (it was the year 1838) to get on in the world. He was in love. He was staying at a large country house. "I wrote your name in large characters and placed it before me. I remembered your parting injunctions. I poured all my spirit into my tragedy. The effort was great"... and yet *Count Alarcos* is rarely performed in British theatres. Perhaps there was something wrong with the young lady's name. She was called Mary Anne. Yet the inspiration of Keats had survived still graver discouragements from the nomenclature of his adored. Perhaps there was something wrong with the critics. "Strange that I never wrote anything that was more talked of in society, and yet it has never been noticed by the scribbling critics." Perhaps (one shrinks from the conjecture) there was something wrong with the play.

It is a ripe exercise in the later manner of *Savonarola*

Savonarola Brown. The characters include "Count Alarcos, a Prince of the Blood," "Guzman Jaca, a Bravo," and "Graus, the Keeper of a Posada"; the supers, as you might expect, are "Courtiers, Pages, Chamberlains, Bravos, and Priests"; and the Time, for reasons which the author had already stated, is "the 13th Century." The scene is Burgos, and it opens with considerable flourish:

Enter TWO COURTIERS.

1ST COUR.

The Prince of Hungary dismissed?

2ND COUR.

Indeed

So runs the rumour.

1ST COUR.

Why the spousal note
Still floats upon the air!

2ND COUR.

Myself this morn
Beheld the Infanta's entrance, as she turned,
Proud

Proud as some bitless bard, her haughty glance
On our assembled chiefs.

1ST COUR.
The Prince was there ?

2ND COUR.
Most royally . . .

One is half afraid, as each line draws to its perfect close, that the poet will fail to keep it up. But with the astonishing energy which was to survive a lifetime spent in Opposition he maintains the splendid standard set in his opening passage. There are bold strokes of local colour, such as :

Yet on the Prado's walk came smiling by
The Bishop of Ossuna . . .

or the vivid ejaculation of a Spanish Friar :

For the love of St. Jago, señors ; for the love of St. Jago !

But the poet is at his happiest when he is most Shakespearian, even though he candidly

candidly confessed to his lady that he saw "no use in writing tragedies unless they be as fine as Shakespeare's." He revels in royal ladies who call a forward Page "Rare imp"; his Bravi reflect credit on their schoolmasters with such admirable reminiscences of their education as, "It was full of meat as an egg"; and the spirit of blank verse so dominates the drama that its last broken line is finished for him by the stage directions:

Go tell him, sirs, the Count Alarcos lived
To find a hell on earth; yet thus he sought
A deeper and a darker. [*Falls.*

THE END.

Yet one fears that the passages which chilled Mr. Macready's enthusiasm were of the simpler sort:

There was a sort of scene to-day at Court;
The Princess fainted—we were all dismissed
Somewhat abruptly . . .

During

During the labours of composition Mr. Disraeli had discovered that, of all forms of literature, tragedy " requires the utmost skill and practice and profound composition. If mine ever appear, it shall be a masterpiece." What appeared was *Count Alarcos* ; and there are two wonderful things about it. The first is that the author, if he is to be believed, burned more of it than he printed ; and the second is that in the year 1868 a version of it ran for five weeks at Astley's " with the loudest demonstrations of applause from delighted audiences." One feels that sometimes we may love our Prime Ministers too well.

MR. GEORGE SAINTSBURY

THERE is an arrogance about these alcoholists. They are perpetually informing a mildly interested world of the devastating nature of their liquid excesses, upon an incorrect assumption that their cubic content is a matter of public importance. In reality one is no more concerned to ascertain anybody's capacity for consuming bumpers, tankards, or flowing bowls (unless he is coming to stay in the house over the week-end) than one is interested in such other personal information about him as the size of his boots or his ability to assimilate

late large quantities of incongruous and indigestible food. These are all private matters of no conceivable public significance, and it seems unreasonable that alcohol should be singled out to receive such wide literary publicity. Yet one does not find Mr. Chesterton embarking as a rollicking raconteur of tales of culinary adventure in which the hero eats in rapid succession two lobsters, a great deal of veal, half a pineapple, and something tasty in pork-pies. And Mr. Belloc, with whom the bottle has almost become a substitute for religious tests, measures a man's orthodoxy almost entirely by his absorbent qualities, and never transfers his attention to the equally irrelevant considerations of the size of his boots in order to sing :—

So whether the boots be women's or men's
From north of the Wash to the Lincoln Fens,
Right good Catholics all wear tens :
Domine cives dirigens.

It

It is a pity. Because there are moments when writer's thirst becomes as irritating to the reader of moderate tastes as writer's cramp to the penman. This literary alcoholism takes our men of letters in various fashions. Mr. Chesterton is perpetually slapping the Universe on the back and asking it to have another drink. Mr. Belloc is forever regarding his neighbour with suspicion and wondering darkly whether his continued sobriety is an indication of Jewish blood. But where other men grow quarrelsome or genial in their cups, Professor Saintsbury naturally enough turns omniscient. One would not willingly accuse him of drinking in cap and gown. But he certainly drinks, if one may judge from the range of his literary allusions, in the library. It sets him quoting Dante and Æschylus and Browning and minor pamphleteers of the Seventeenth Century. Sometimes he sets his cap at a rakish angle and digs

digs his reader in the ribs with a knowing reference to Zola or Sandeau or obscure Victorian comic songs. But always the burden of his song is " Trinc ! "

One hardly knows whether to laugh or to cry. It may be entertaining enough for the connoisseur to track down Professor Saintsbury's wine-list through the jungle of his literary allusions. But when he mounts the pulpit with a perfectly solemn face, to beat clouds of dust out of the cushion, and declaim against " the so-called Temperance party " and " magistrates who cackle about the mischiefs of alcohol," one is half inclined to regret that he did not confine his *Notes* to the exposition of one gentleman's alcoholic vicissitudes in the later years of the Nineteenth Century. The analysis of bibulous experience is a topic on which one would listen respectfully to the wine-butler of any West End club ; but one would feel a certain irritation if he extended the

the scope of his observations to include the more serious political problems of the day.

Professor Saintsbury's own case is a distressing demonstration of the deadly efficacy of environment. After leaving Oxford, of which his chief recollection appears to be "a good brown sherry of Guy and Gammon's," he resided for six years on the island of Guernsey, "where," as he tells in a mood of gentle regret which would melt the intrepid Mr. Johnson himself, "you could get blind drunk for sixpence." Edinburgh is remembered as "the headquarters at one time of claret-drinkers." Holland and the Carthusian Order are identified with the production of Hollands and Chartreuse respectively, and the map of Europe becomes a mere wine-list. The point of view is entertaining, and it is only when Professor Saintsbury asks to be taken seriously that one is inclined to resent the incurable frivolity

frivolity of one's elders. One would have been glad to hear a little more of the conversation and a little less of the wine-list; but unhappily the talk is almost inaudible beneath the popping of Professor Saintsbury's corks. Those menus which he lingeringly reprints contain the secret of his fallacy about drink. It is one thing for Professor Saintsbury to sit back and take his port after *Vol au vent à la financière* and *Filets de Pigeons à la Pompadour*. But it would be quite another affair for society if he were drinking bad whisky or arsenical beer in a public-house without any of these pleasing accompaniments. And perhaps it is of that grimmer case that "the so-called Temperance party" is thinking, when it incurs Professor Saintsbury's indignation by endeavouring to rob the rich man of his beer.

DEAN INGE

The economists are perpetually trying to lend interest to a dull subject by giving the most exciting names to the singularly unexciting events which compose the calendar of their history. Thus, when eighty-five stout gentlemen with large cigars lose a great deal of money, which they had not yet made, they call it a Crisis. And when two hundred and sixty-three stockbrokers make an undue noise in a large building in New York, they call it

it a Panic. And when machinery chased the cottage-worker out of industry and British manufacturers flitted northwards in pursuit of the coal-supply, they call it, most dramatically, the Industrial Revolution.

Now that Revolution, which brought machinery into production, did something more than change the face of British industry. It transformed the brains of British thought. Our manufactures became machine-made : and that, in a world hungry for production, was a step in advance. But at the same moment our ideas became machine-made as well : and that, in a world starving for lack of intelligent and original thought, was a step backwards.

The mechanical printing-machine gave us the mechanical Press. And the mechanical Press gave us the automatic journalist, who is ready with his daily, weekly, or monthly

monthly oracle and is as much the servant of the machines as the man who stands by with a piece of greasy cotton-waste.

That is why one feels an extraordinary debt of gratitude to any man of education who is willing to lecture us about public affairs instead of leaving the business to the harassed men who are chained to their office-telephones and cannot hear what is happening in the world outside for the rolling stamp and thunder of the printing-machines.

Perhaps that is why the world of the newspapers has never taken kindly to Dean Inge. Here was a man without a paper to his name (for it can hardly be that St. Paul's Cathedral has a parish magazine) who usurped the authority of the omniscient gentlemen who write the leading articles and undertook to lecture his fellow-countrymen on their affairs. Any journalist could see that the claim was preposterous and

and had to be denied. The man was demonstrably a black-leg. So they conspired to call him the Gloomy Dean.

It was a silly nick-name. But it has stuck. Perhaps this spitefulness was partly due to one's genuine uncertainty as to how Dean Inge really pronounces himself. One is always left wondering whether he rhymes with the first syllable of 'ping-pong' or with the second syllable of 'impinge.'

But you cannot dismiss an intelligent and articulate man with a nick-name, and the Dean's point of view is often an opinion to be reckoned with.

If he has a fault, it is a weakness which he has learnt from his competitors in publicity, the journalists. He loves to make our flesh creep. He conceals somewhere deep down in that distinguished ecclesiastical composition a taste for scare-headlines. And like all Englishmen when they

they are about to be most romantic and imaginative, he calls it Facing the Facts.

The fact that he is continually facing is the present state of England. He looks on it from time to time and finds that it is not good. Starting in the exalted atmosphere of Eugenics, he generally ends up in the crowded morass of present-day politics. In his defence of Eugenics he provides the engaging and unusual spectacle of the Church militant in defence of Science. But it is to be feared that the normal human being will always regard Eugenics as an unwarranted invasion of his right to select his own young lady.

The Dean's argument for scientific marriage shews his characteristic courage in defence of lost causes. But in his eagerness to fix the guilt on Democracy he need not have said that "it is only in the lowest strata that the worst specimens, the imbecile for instance, get married," because

because some of us have been to the House of Lords.

And the simple truth is that you cannot rob the Plain Man of his Plain Wife.

But from Eugenics and the dismal reflection that "we are breeding from our worst stocks," he passed on one occasion to taxation. Deans; like the rest of us, pay Income Tax, and Dean Inge is left with the melancholy certainty that "whenever one class imposes taxes and another class pays them, the result is reckless extravagance and foolish waste." But the extravagance is no worse when the poor are taxing the rich than it used to be when the rich were taxing the poor.

We shall soon come, he said, to "the disappearance of the tax-paying class." And that may be true as well. If we do, the English Revolution will have happened without anyone noticing it. Such a consummation would turn our Reds positively green

green with envy of the wider opportunities enjoyed by their Russian brothers.

But it would be quite in the British tradition. When the old France went up in flames in 1793, all the world waited for an English Revolution to be its counterpart. It never came with fire and sword and guillotines. It merely happened by Act of Parliament in 1832. So it may be that the meek, black-coated Tax-collector is the Lenin of the new Revolution, and the Dean has caught him at it.

II

MEN OF WAR

Mr. G. K. Chesterton
The Normans
The Ironsides
The Reds
The Huns

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON

We live (it is the perpetual complaint of modern men) in a lamentably complex world. When the Crusaders rode slowly down through Europe to the Holy Land, they were thrust upon that long road by a simple desire to fight the Paynim. But when Mr. Chesterton got into his train at Beaconsfield and set his face towards Jerusalem by way of London and Cairo, he was a queer bundle of ideas. Somewhere deep down inside his intellectual clothes one

one might have found the simple, woad-stained Briton who made pagan gestures at the sun on Salisbury Plain and charged the Roman legionaries behind Boadicea for the crude but sufficient reason that they were foreigners. This engaging person, however, has been overlaid by the voluminous integuments of Mr. Chesterton's other (and less primitive) personalities. Next to the skin, it would seem, he wears the protective but somewhat bulky metal underclothing of a mediæval gentleman with a taste for physical violence and a preference for his Jews under lock and key. Then supervenes (for he is travelling to visit a British army in the field) the tricolour sash and large, revolutionary sympathies of one of Robespierre's *Représentants en mission.* And finally there is the quieter overcoating of a modern journalistic gentleman, with a good deal of literature on the subject of Marconi shares

shares in one of the pockets. That is the composite Mr. Chesterton with whom we have to deal. One is left with a vague feeling that he travelled to Palestine with Mr. Belloc's luggage.

In that odd way in which it has taken so many Europeans since Peter the Hermit, he heard the East a-calling. But the delightful surprise that was waiting for him was the discovery, when he got nearer to the call, that its voice was just like that of the West. "As soon as I was walking inside the walls of Jerusalem," he confided to his note-book, "I had an overwhelming impression that I was walking in the town of Rye, where it looks across the great sea-meadows toward Winchelsea." One waits breathlessly for this sentimental traveller to make the further discovery that the utterance of the Prophet Isaiah reminds him irresistibly of that other Rye worthy, Mr. Henry James. But although it

it never comes, one's confidence in Mr. Chesterton as a guide through the mazes of an Asiatic problem hardly survives this bland assertion that the East *is* the West after all.

When he comes to the Jewish question, our traveller, who has always affected a childish simplicity, remembers only to be childish without being particularly simple. Admitting with a gracious gesture that the Jews (like the Canaanites before them) have some slender historical connection with Palestine, he is magnanimously prepared to allow them to build a religious centre somewhere in Jerusalem. It might even be convenient, he suggests helpfully, to revert to the portable Ark of their migratory period. Round this swinging centre there is to be a scattered, world-wide circle of Jewish colonies; and in all the places where these Jewish colonists sit down by the waters of Europe and America,

America, with their faces turned miserably towards an Arab-Anglican Jerusalem that is strongly reminiscent of Rye, those men without a country are to be branded in every possible way as foreigners. "Every Jew," Mr. Chesterton writes, with a pleasing touch of his old Napoleonic fancy for outlandish costume, "must be dressed like an Arab. Let him sit on the Woolsack, but let him sit there dressed as an Arab. Let him preach in St. Paul's Cathedral, but let him preach there dressed as an Arab." Resisting for a moment the temptation to ask Mr. Chesterton, usually so sensitive to ethnological distinctions, how he managed to leave Palestine under the happy impression that Arab and Jew are interchangeable terms, one is bound to remind him that if a man is to be treated as a foreigner, it is the foreigner's right to find somewhere in the world a foreign country that he can call his own.

In

In the distant days when Mr. Zangwill was a symbol of the Jewish national movement, Mr. Beerbohm caricatured him entering the Promised Land and followed by a complete void : that was a wild vision of Zion and no Jews. Mr. Chesterton's happy anticipation of the future world would appear to be the exact opposite and to consist of a great many, far too many Jews—and no Zion.

THE NORMANS

THERE is undoubtedly an air about the Normans: you must have noticed it on the Bayeux Tapestry. That fascinating perspective, those becoming nose-pieces, that graceful attitude of perpetually stooping to conquer have all combined to lend distinction to those reformed pirates. They have, so to say, an historical *chic*; and, as is usual with smart people, their excess of style is not diminished by their deficiency of character. One is proud, historically, of

of associating with them. Nobody would dream of boasting about a Saxon incursion or a Roman occupation ; but a Norman Conquest is somehow a different matter. It is an honour to be raided by them, a privilege to be burnt by them, and a distinction to be conquered by them. One feels, as the flames shoot up and the prisoners troop down to the beach, that one is associating with gentlemen.

There is a queer streak of Norman history which lies across the early Middle Ages from Stavanger to Constantinople by way of Rouen, Battle Abbey, and Palermo. Any historian must recognise that the leading feature of the Normans was their constant habit of coming over. They came over, as appears from the map of Europe, almost anywhere and, as appears from the House of Lords, with almost anyone. In the beginning they emerged from Scandinavia in days when that region possessed

possessed a power of export that was almost as highly developed as its more recent capacity (if one remembers the blockade) for importation. They emerged with healthy appetites and a distaste for dogmatic religion in vessels which one historian describes (with a sudden whiff of Mr. Rudyard Kipling) as "shallow, clinker-built, half-decked craft"; and they proceeded to make themselves exceedingly unpopular up and down the coasts of Western Europe. Two routes presented themselves to the Norse cruiser-commander emerging from his fjord, as to the German commerce-destroyer putting out of Cuxhaven: he might either go through the North Sea and the Straits of Dover to the coasts of the English Channel, or he might sail North about Scotland by way of Iceland and the somewhat inadequate Promised Land of Greenland. As he was unaware of the attractive prospect afforded

afforded at the end of the latter route by the wigwams of the ancestors of so many of our friends, he selected the former. The result was the Duchy of Normandy, the Norman Conquest, the Anglo-Norman empire of the Angevin Kings, the Normans in Sicily, the Latin Empire of the East, and the short stories of M. de Maupassant.

In the earlier phase the normal historian reveals an unholy taste for Sagas of the most sanguinary vintage. He lays about him with all the energy of the literary man in battle ; his axe rattles about the helmets of his enemies, the arrows fly frequent as Reparation Notes, and he finds time in the *mêlée* to make the most unpleasant physiological notes on the wounds of his adversaries. But this form of entertainment (Mr. Arnold Bennett called it " the Blood-tub " in its Bursley days) really misrepresents the Normans.

They were undeniably Norsemen, but if

if that was all, no one except epic poets would bother to remember them. They were also frigid and highly successful bureaucrats with a gift for administration that was almost Roman ; no one would believe the yellow-haired athletes who populate the Sagas capable of inventing the Exchequer. Here the historian is bound to be a judicious, if not conspicuously original, gleaner in a field which many Ruths have worked over before his arrival, and he walks warily between the various Scyllæ and (to be exact) Charybdides which are provided by Professor Vinogradoff, Miss Norgate, and that inimitable controversialist, Mr. Round.

The Mediterranean career of those burglarious aristocrats from Norway is one of the strangest episodes in European history. Perspiring men with fair complexions succeeded in imposing an alien monarchy on Latin and even on Greek populations ;

populations ; their administration in the South was in some ways more efficient than in England, but the edifice was, as one historian writes, with an obvious eye to eventual translation into Latin prose, " brilliant but ephemeral, precocious but lacking in permanent results." It is a warning to Empire-builders.

THE IRONSIDES

Of course we all know Science when we meet her: any student of Victorian monuments will tell you that. A large lady in a chiton, carrying a steam-roller in one hand and a fret-saw in the other, is bound to be noticed anywhere. One mostly meets her on one of those thronged provincial pediments that look like petrified scenes from a jumble-sale of the Parthenon Women-Workers' Guild. She was a nice sensible person with fixed data and definite conclusions,

conclusions, who parted her hair exactly in the middle and invented the spinning-jenny and the steam locomotive. Perhaps there were moments when she liked to have her little fling at Genesis. But that was only her way. She was on excellent terms with all constituted authorities, and you knew exactly where you were with her. Nowadays, however, things are changing. There are light-minded young things like Psychology, with too many data and no conclusions, and Sociology, with too many conclusions and no data. Any collection of inaccurate information is described as a Science; and the lady herself is left, like Mrs. Gummidge, thinking of the Victorian old 'uns.

The position of Political Science is about half-way between the giddy young things and Science in the Albert Memorial sense. It has a suspicious attraction for dangerously modern persons like Mr. H. G. Wells. But

But its existence is recognised by at least one of our older universities, and it has been the object of attentions from Mr. W. H. Mallock. On the whole it is probably old enough to be respectable ; Hobbes and Aristotle are surely adequate witnesses to anybody's character.

There has not been much of it in England since 1688. The Seventeenth Century was one of the few periods when England thought politically. In the years between Gunpowder Plot and the Glorious Revolution England was interested, as it was rarely to be interested again, in English politics ; it was so interested that it beheaded one English king and exiled another. Whilst Europe was working out in the Thirty Years' War the decline of Spain, the transformation of Germany, and the rise of France, Englishmen discussed with more than Austinian fervour the true sources of sovereignty in the State. The

The printing-press was full of political theory, and men became articulate in controversy even at Court. For a short time the people of England even appeared to be capable of intellectual indignation. A committee was appointed to read the *Leviathan* for traces of political impropriety, and Hobbes was threatened with the prospect of prosecution. It is not easy to imagine an Attorney-General who would be sufficiently interested in principles to prosecute Mr. H. G. Wells at the age of seventy-eight for the opinions expressed in *Anticipations*.

England in the Seventeenth Century had definitely emerged from the Middle Ages. The Reformation had cut the painter (and a great many of the painters); and whilst Western Europe settled down to the armed discussion of religious doctrine, England began to talk politics with enormous energy. The Papacy had been expelled

expelled from the island by a strong monarchy ; but that Protestant monarchy was confronted almost at once by the equally Protestant temper of individualism. The whole history of the century in England was derived from that confrontation ; it was equally responsible for the Cavalier's doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings and for the Roundhead's doctrine of the political right of Parliaments. Since the King of England was a highly-educated Scot, conditions seemed favourable for the opening of a lengthy debate ; and in the political ideas of James I. the first shot was fired. In the teeth of John Knox's view that " no oath or promise can bind the people to obey and maintain tyrants against God, and if they have ignorantly chosen such as after declare themselves unworthy, most justly may they depose and punish them " (which is slightly suggestive of Treitschke's doctrine of

of contractual validity *rebus sic stantibus*), James aimed gradually, but with decision, at the doctrine of Divine Right.

The British Solomon, when he observed in 1610 that "the state of monarchy is the supremest thing on earth, for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, but even by God Himself they are called gods," is not so much reminiscent of the House of David as of the House of Hohenzollern; he even disapproved of the Dutch because they were so shockingly republican. Bacon appears to have supported his master to the full; his contempt for lawyers displays an admirable modesty on the subject of his own profession, his economic observation that "the increase of any State must be upon the foreigners" is painfully premonitory of Mr. Chamberlain's theory of the incidence of import duties; and his foreign policy was frankly Bernhardian. But when he tore himself away

away from the manuscript of *The Merry Wives* to write to Windsor, he adopted the prostrate attitude of a sound monarchist.

Absolutism was soon faced by its enemies; and the lawyers prepared the Great Rebellion as soundly as they were afterwards to make the French Revolution. Coke and Selden, Robespierre and Danton were in turn the leaders of a group of revolutionary barristers. Coke was not found upon the barricades, but entrenched behind the more impenetrable volumes of his Reports; Selden, an admirable conversationalist, was, in one judgment, the first Whig; it is a distinction which Dr. Johnson would not have hesitated to bestow. And so the Revolution was controlled by the lawyers, until in 1647 there entered the Army, and England went to the splendid experiment of the English Republic.

THE REDS

THERE is a passage of singular eloquence in Mr. Conrad's *Mirror of the Sea*—or perhaps one should call it, in order to enforce the vital distinction between art and its poor relation, Nature, the mirror of Mr. Conrad's sea—in which he paints with the rotund dignity of a decorator of symbolical ceilings the portraits of the east and west winds. "The King of the West . . . is a barbarian of a northern type. Violent without craftiness, and furious without

without malice, one may imagine him seated masterfully, with a double-edged sword on his knees, upon the painted and gilt clouds of the sunset, bowing his shock head of golden locks, a flaming brand over his breast, imposing, colossal, mighty-limbed, with a thundering voice. . . . The other, the East King, the king of blood-red sunrises, I represent to myself as a spare Southerner, with clear-cut features, black-browed and dark-eyed, grey-robed, upright in sunshine, resting a smooth-shaven cheek in the palm of his hand, impenetrable, secret, full of wiles, fine-drawn, keen —meditating aggressions."

The contrast, which is so nobly drawn, doubtless possesses a meteorological significance upon which it is hardly possible to comment unless one shares Mr. Conrad's rare advantages of maritime experience. But to the mere historian, who has never threaded the Straits or beaten up across the

the Bay, it seems vividly suggestive of the difference between the two winds of revolution that have swept across Europe in the past four generations.

The west wind, which set from the quarter of Paris in the last decade of the Eighteenth Century and blew steadily upon Central and Southern Europe for fifty years until it fanned Germany and Italy into a blaze, was a genial hurricane. It might blow things down, if their bad fortune had stood them in its path. Feudalism, privilege, and petty monarchy tilted and fell before the rush of it. But after it had swept the land clear, it brought rain and fertility out of the west; and men planted hopefully and reaped with gratitude in the clearings which it had made among the tall trees. The recurring French Revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848 were eminently fruitful. But the east wind, the Russian Revolution, is a barren

barren business. Driving hard out of the east, it cuts like a knife and blasts and withers like the sirocco. Where it has blown, things do not easily learn to grow again ; and its masters seem to sit very like Mr. Conrad's East King, " impenetrable, secret, full of wiles, fine-drawn, keen—meditating aggressions." It has inspired the world with an unwholesome fear of revolutions, and it is good to be reminded by the history of the last century that there was once a revolution which redeemed Europe.

The Red influence, which was more familiar to our grandfathers as a tricolour, continued to live and work after the Guard had reeled back at Waterloo. In 1830 it rose again in the singularly blameless, incarnation of King Louis Philippe ; and once more it fanned as much of Europe as looked west to France.

A German historian's study of the French influence

influence upon Germany in the Thirties is entertaining, if only because one always enjoys the grimaces of a historian engaged in the assimilation of unpalatable facts. The poor man positively writhes as he sets down on his page the part played by " the outworn ideas of '89 " in transforming the face of German history. In reality (and the unhappy patriot knows it perfectly well) the municipal history of Paris between the years 1789 and 1793 was responsible, through its European reactions, for converting the comic *bürgerlich* Germany, which Kotzebue caricatured in Krähwinkel, into that perplexed country in mid-stream of the European movement which groped for ideas, stumbled through the revolutions of 1848, and drifted with a feeble gesture of protest into the majestic procession of Bismarckian Imperialism.

There is something a trifle quaint in reading at this distance of time the writings of

of the once dreaded Treitschke. One almost recovers the queer, far-away feeling of the year 1914, when England fell suddenly into war with a mysterious race of anthropophagi which was reported by travellers to devote its spare time to the worship of a heathen trinity called Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardi. The adventure of reading Treitschke quite gives one the stale flavour of early recruiting posters, and the sound of Mr. Asquith unsheathing his sword comes faintly down the wind.

Treitschke, to say truth, was a person of undue vehemence. He wrote history so like an irritable headmaster that he not infrequently reduces his reader to the corresponding state of mind of an angry schoolboy. This preposterous foreigner with his allusive omniscience is sometimes too much even for the most tolerant and modest student. There is a dreadful passage

passage in which he explains, with a sweep of the gown, that with the Reform Bill of 1832 " the great days of English Parliamentary life were drawing to a close."

With a particularly unhappy prevision he indicates a likely future in which " it remained extremely dubious whether England would not some day tranquilly abandon the new protégé " of 1839: the abandonment of Belgium, when it came, was not noticeably an act of British policy. The poor man was always unfortunate when he rolled his angry eye in the direction of perfidious Albion. Palmerston, whom he irritably labelled " the Talleyrand of Parliamentarianism," naturally incurs his particular displeasure ; and it is a just revenge that a vigorous description of the Foreign Minister is defaced by an exquisite allusion to his " walk home with elastic tread with a flower always in his mouth." It presumably represents the straw

straw that *Punch* so invariably (and inaccurately) attributed to him; but the Right Honourable gentleman rarely masqueraded as Carmen in Parliament Street.

Treitschke despised small States with the full contempt of an adopted German. But one hopes, for his credit and the reputation of Czecho-Slovakia that Professor Masaryk will never, as Mr. Henry James would knowingly have said, "let on" that the historian's name should be spelt Trschky.

THE HUNS

One day, when all the best books in the world get written, instead of being merely projected after dinner, some energetic disciple of Sir James Frazer will write a really good handbook of international mythology. It will contain a full study of those queer, distorted figures in which the people of each nation have thought fit to personify and misconceive the neighbouring races ; and considerable space will be given to the startling changes that sweep from

from time to time over the stock characters that people the stage of the international caricaturist. It will be, as one sees it now, a large, distinguished-looking book in a rather quiet, dignified binding, and the price —unless in the interval something drastic happens to the book trade—will probably be prohibitive for all persons except that fortunate minority which is privileged to receive review and complimentary copies. But it will be a good book.

There will be a careful analysis of John Bull, who will be methodically disintegrated into his constituent parts ; the hat, the boots, the buckskin breeches, and the resolute smile will each be traced to its original significance ; and a special section will be devoted to that less genial figure whose aggressive denture, flanked by whiskers and surmounted by a bold check deer-stalker, was formerly the despair of Continental Anglophobes.

The

The author, if he is quite worthy of my plan, will trace with quiet irony the changing phases of the British conception of France—the gaunt Mounseer of the late Eighteenth Century, the frantic Jacobin of the Revolutionary War, the ridiculous, bearded buffoon of the middle Nineteenth Century whose ties, top-hats, and manners in the hunting-field placed him frankly beyond the pale, the improper but undeniably attractive young persons in short skirts that ushered in the Entente Cordiale, and the final, god-like figure of to-day that combines the Greek profile of the Third Republic and the inspired eye of Joan of Arc with faint indications of the personal appearance of M. Poincaré.

But he will find the richest material of all in the successive figures that have been used in this country for the representation of Germany. There has been a steadily swelling diapason of popular myth. The German

German people has been represented to the British intelligence by a marvellous procession of carnival grotesques. First there was the simple Suabian peasant whose untutored joy of life was expressed mainly in wood-carving, *Volkslieder*, and the fabrication of cuckoo clocks; his profile ran largely to porcelain pipe, and he stood respectfully aside as blind philosophers and deaf composers of classical music, of whom the upper classes appeared almost entirely to consist, came pounding absent-mindedly down the road. Then came the long-haired, sentimental professors of 1848, whose interests were divided symmetrically between tobacco and the Fatherland, followed after a short interval by the tall red-bearded conquerors of 1870.

It is at this point in the procession of mythical figures that one expects the most elaborate scenic effects in the German myth.

One

One always hopes, if the historian knows his business, that he will set his stage in 1871 with the Paladins grouped impressively round that never-to-be-forgotten grandfather to whose memory the ex-Emperor so frequently invited his Brandenburgers to raise their glasses. There may even be a distant rumble of Martin Luther's hymn, and a flash of diabolical cunning from the Iron Chancellor. Like a well-drilled audience at a cinema, we have all learnt so thoroughly what to look forward to on these occasions that the substitution of the facts of history for the expected effect comes almost as a shock : it is almost as though the villain's motor-car had trundled precariously out on to the swaying bridge made of a single plank—and the bridge held. The true facts of the last seventeen years of the reign of William I. are sadly disappointing. Behind the whiskered rectitude of a good husband,

modèle

modèle 1850, one may detect the unbending temper of a soldier monarch; and Bismarck was not nearly so wicked as his Autobiography. The story goes on, and the old Emperor fades away. A curt dismissal of the reign of the Emperor Frederick will distress those English readers who always seem to find a lingering enjoyment in that delicate aroma of romance which in this country is inseparable from throat complaints with fatal terminations.

The rest of the story brings one to William II. The historian's foot must display remarkable agility among the hot ashes of so much—and so hot—contemporary controversy. The ingredients of modern Germany, the arrogance, the bad manners, the new colonialism, and the pride of purse, have come largely from a single cause: having passed two centuries in the apostolic poverty enforced by the devastation

devastation of the Thirty Years' War, the country passed suddenly in the middle years of the Nineteenth Century through its Industrial Revolution. It went in with a population of landlords and labourers, and it came out with an industrial system and a wealthy class dangerously resembling those which it saw in control of the British Empire. The result was the naval effort, the Chinese adventure, Berlin-Baghdad, and Liège-Mons. And somewhere in that chapter we are still floundering.

III

MEN OF MARK

M. de Mirabeau
Mr. Pitt
Mr. Windham
'Mr. President'

M. DE MIRABEAU

When a Prime Minister of the Third Republic writes a life of the first statesman of the Revolution, the result is probably worth reading. It is always comforting to discover that a politician can spell, and history has always been the polite recreation of public men from the Georgians to Lord Rosebery. In the intervals of his vigorous (and successful) propulsion of the Three Years Bill through the Chamber, M. Barthou descended as a pastime into the crowded

crowded and strenuous arena of Revolutionary historians : it was a highly successful excursion. It is not surprising that M. Barthou is right about the Revolution ; it is impossible to become Premier in a country where every election-address begins with the *principes de* 89, without understanding the Revolution. But the surprising success of the book is the personal study of Mirabeau ; graceful biography is an unexpected accomplishment in Prime Ministers.

The combination of a distinguished author with a pre-eminent subject is irresistible. One had begun to fear that we were never to meet Danton or Mirabeau or Robespierre again ; the biographers have been so busy among the supers, and M. Le Bon had been reduced to the psychology of the Revolution (that non-existent thing). Our attention in this branch of studies has been focussed of late

so

so exclusively upon the minnows of the Revolution that one turns with relief to a study of someone who really mattered. We have been taught so much about the architect of Lafayette's second house and the love-affairs of Danton's bookseller, that it seemed almost too much to hope for a book about one of the principals.

The history of the Riquetti family gives a foretaste of Mirabeau. Something violent and remarkable was bound to emerge from this eccentric Provençal group. His grandfather was distinguished by the possession of a false neck in silver, a relic of the Italian wars, and his father was a strange type of that period of intellectual activity which preceded the Revolution ; the *Ami des Hommes* was the friend of Quesnay the Encyclopædist, author of an Arthur Young tour in France, and possessor of advanced views on economics and provincial estates.

Gabriel

Gabriel Honoré Mirabeau was born in 1749, and early took the smallpox, which was the earliest contribution to his terrifying appearance. His education was conducted at a military school, suitably called the Pension Choquard. An unfamiliar page of his history is Mirabeau's military career; his later political action was so entirely civilian that it is surprising to find him serving impartially in the cavalry and the infantry; but certain aspects of his character must have been congenial to the dragoons. He served in the expedition to Corsica of 1769, which recovered that island for France and prevented Napoleon from being born a British subject, enabling him to join the only arm in which Mirabeau had not served and to become Emperor of the French.

His career next passed into a picturesque atmosphere of moneylenders and *lettres de cachet*; the affairs of his heart became multifarious

multifarious and absorbing ; and although posterity has woven his wild oats into a civic crown, the narrative of his romances forms an undignified prelude to the National Assembly. His prisons were as numerous as Verlaine's ; he visited Monte Cristo's Château d'If and Toussaint l'Ouverture's Château de Saux ; the latter, a fortress in the Jura, he described picturesquely as " a nest of owls in the land of bears." He now disappears into a romantic whirl of detectives, young ladies, and indignant fathers. He fled into Switzerland and doubled back into Holland ; he became a bookseller's hack in Amsterdam, and was condemned by a Dutch court to be beheaded in effigy.

He returned to his own country to conduct a heated and personal litigation ; so effective was his appearance in person that his opponent's counsel fainted in court. And through the whole of his wild

wild adventure his literary output was maintained in a steady and highly variegated stream ; the salt-marshes of Franche Comté, Despotism, the Jews, *Lettres de Cachet*, concerts in Amsterdam, and the opening of the Scheldt all provided him with subjects for rapid composition or (more often) a facile and prehensile collaboration. His genius for absorbent collaboration, which provides one of the main problems in the study of his oratory, was equalled only by the elder Dumas.

He now emerged from exile and prison into financial journalism ; a visit to London brought him into contact with Shelburne, always a collector of intelligent foreigners, and Burke, and Brissot, unconscious of his destiny as a Girondin Premier. He went to Berlin as a "subaltern diplomatist," and wrote amusing despatches ; two audiences with Frederick the Great shed a glory of

of reflected respectability on his growing reputation. He formed a friendship with the enlightened Duke of Brunswick, whose insane proclamation was to precipitate the September Massacres ; collaboration with a painstaking German officer produced a monumental work on Prussia, and Mirabeau contemplated settling down in a book-selling business in Kiel eight years before Napoleon prepared to take service in the Turkish artillery. If the world had seen "*Mirabeau, Buchhandlung*" and Bonaparte Pasha, it would have lost half the Revolution and all the Empire.

His career now became the history of the Revolution ; the Deputy for the *Tiers* of Aix, with his mass of hair and team of little Swiss secretaries, was a figure of European significance. The desperate attempt to preserve the King and Queen, his "wards," the statesmanship of his Notes to the Court, the tragedy of his struggle

struggle against the suspicion of purchase, and the supreme apotheosis of his death swept him into history, and in history one leaves him.

MR. PITT

The reputation of William Pitt in past history, like that of Lord Grey in present politics, has been largely made by foreigners : that is why they have got him hopelessly wrong. Foreigners, as the inhabitants of Europe are rightly called by the population of two islands lying somewhere off the western extremity of the Continent, are as a class astonishingly ignorant. They know no English, their railway-platforms are merely ridiculous, and,

and, above all, they have never heard of an Englishman—or if they have, they misconceive his nature as completely as they mutilate his name. If it is the first distinction of an English statesman to have a *Punch* cartoon to himself, it is a second and greater glory to get his name spelt correctly by a French newspaper. The people of Europe will never comprehend the subtlety of an island which simultaneously got its colonies governed by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and its plays censored by the Lord Chamberlain, whilst it produced in a bewildering succession Mr. Arthur Balfour, the late Lord Burleigh, and Lord Balfour of Burleigh. These are the things that keep the foreigner in his place. But since he is (in spite of his odd appearance) human, he revenges himself at least once in a generation by seizing an Englishman, distorting him beyond the recognition of his countrymen, and calling the remains

a European reputation. That is the trouble with William Pitt.

This process, which is familiar to students of Byron, has become the peculiar misfortune of British Ministers. Just as Lord Palmerston, a jolly old gentleman who owned race-horses, was always regarded in Vienna as the morose associate of any desperado who would set a bomb under a throne, so Pitt, who was an intelligent barrister of distinctly Liberal, Free Trade, and pacifist views, has become in the foreign imagination a sinister and untiring reactionary whose guineas were at the disposal of any tyrant who would kill a free man. A curiously similar fate overtook the Continental reputation of Sir Edward Grey, who became transfigured in the eyes of Central Europe into a blood-drinking Machiavelli whose diabolical subtlety would deceive anybody but a literary man, although in England his laborious efforts

efforts to maintain peace earned him the indignation of those militant pacifists who appear to wish that he could have threatened war eleven days before he ventured to mention the subject.

In the year 1793, as in the year 1914, a British Minister who had served honourably the cause of peace entered with profound misgivings on a Great War. The decisive act in each case was the threat of a hostile control of the Low Countries; Pitt was able to say in 1793 that "War, whenever it comes, will be preferable to peace without honour, without security, and which is incompatible with the external safety of the internal happiness of this country." He enunciated the text from which all England preached for the past few years, when he insisted that "England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a natural right of

of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe established by solemn treaties and guaranteed by the consent of all the Powers." It may be that the "scrap of paper" point possessed a peculiar attraction for those statesmen who are also lawyers; but it was beyond all controversy a just and proper argument, which it is interesting to find in the mouth of an English Minister a hundred years ago.

The whole of Pitt's active career was the career of a peace Minister: fiscal reform, Free Trade, and the satisfaction of Ireland were the subjects that had engaged his attention before the French Revolution broke the dams and swept out into Europe. He had been far too intelligent to believe in any inevitable war between France and England: "To suppose that any nation could be unalterably the enemy of another was weak and childish." He regarded the progress

progress of the Revolution in Paris with what Mr. Churchill would have called "the modern eye." But when it became evident that the Republic was merely concealing under a more modern and impressive terminology the traditional objects of hostile French policy, he committed England to the war against France.

It was an unfortunate accident that this posture also involved his country in a war against the Revolution, because the Revolution happened to be right. France might be wrong, but it resulted that English statesmen, and especially William Pitt, were driven by the exigencies of national policy to talk a considerable deal of nonsense about the principles of the Revolution. A great deal of that nonsense is to be found in his war speeches, but there is with it a calm and consistent statement of British policy, which it is profitable to study

study at any time. Parallels meet one at every turn :

> We are not in arms against the opinions of the closet nor the speculations of the school. We are at war with armed opinions. We are at war with those opinions which the sword of audacious, unprincipled, and impious innovation seeks to propagate amidst the ruin of empires, the demolition of the altars of all religion, the destruction of every venerable and good and liberal institution, under whatever form of polity it has been raised.

That is the way that Englishmen always talk in time of war. He had to deal with the question of contraband (" the question is whether we are to suffer neutral nations by hoisting a flag upon a sloop or fishing boat to convey the treasures of South America to the harbours of Spain or the naval stores of the Baltic to Brest or Toulon ") and the old fallacy of the preventive war (" that if a nation is unjustly attacked

attacked in any quarter by others, she cannot stop to consider by whom, but must find means of strength in other quarters, no matter where, and is justified in attacking in her turn those with whom she is at peace and from whom she has received no species of provocation "). It is a familiar atmosphere.

A solemn biographer has sacrificed truth to patriotism in giving " My country ! How I love my country ! " as Pitt's last words. One has always preferred to think that the Right Honourable gentleman expired with the alternative (and less inhuman) murmur : " I think I could eat one of Bellamy's pork-pies."

MR. WINDHAM

THERE is no game better than the game of make-believe, and it has more players than most children would suspect. We have most of us made selection of a period of history for our especial playground, and we keep it so far reconstructed in the mind that we can at will re-enter it. For some it is Versailles and the solemn business of pleasure, for many the stamp and thunder of the Revolution, and for some again the gas-lamps of the Second Empire. It is an inexpensive

inexpensive game, enabling you to meet the most distinguished people without ever paying your bills ; and for the playing of it there are few English epochs to compare with the age of William Pitt. Near enough to our own time to be strongly flavoured with the West End and the House of Commons, it is yet transfigured by its contact with the French Revolution, which conferred distinction even on its opponents. Through the weary gaming notoriety of "Faro's Daughters" and the monotonous achievements of the six-bottle men sounds the deeper note of the struggle in which unheroic and high-waisted men wrestled with the superhuman energy of the Republic. It is a time of singular contradictions, in which the urbanity of a petty social life is contrasted strangely with the vast issues of the Revolutionary War.

To the literature of this period the papers of Mr. Windham make an important

portant contribution. When a Norfolk gentleman knows Doctor Johnson, acts as political heir to Burke, and is for seven years Pitt's War Minister, the accident that has rescued him from the biographers is little short of miraculous ; and when his correspondents include Fox, Pitt, Canning, Nelson, and Cobbett, we would rather see his letters than swim in an ocean of memoirs.

Lord Rosebery writes without sympathy of " the Weather-cock " : he says of him that " he left no stamp, no school, no work " ; it may be intended, coming from such a quarter, as a compliment. When Disraeli maintained of Lord Shelburne that he had discovered him, while Lord Morley called him " one of the precursors of the Manchester School " and Lord Rosebery demonstrated that he was impossible in any Cabinet, each was bestowing the highest praise that he could give. And

And who knows that his condemnation of Windham's barrenness was not meant to go to the credit of his account? But it is a singularly harsh judgment passed on an admitted leader living at a time when the English Counter-revolution condemned its statesmen to the unbroken barrenness of a negative position. His official life was passed in the War Office, that overcrowded cemetery of British reputations; but it is not fair for that reason to set him down with Strachan and Brodrick. Lord Macaulay and Lord Rosebery unite in labelling him as a gentleman of superfine gentility, but he was a man of considerable wit and ability as well. One would not willingly forget his towering ridicule of an ill-conceived raid on Antwerp:

"Good God, sir! Talk of a *coup de main* with forty thousand men and thirty-three sail of the line! Gentlemen might as well talk of a *coup de main* in the Court of Chancery!"

Macaulay's

Macaulay's perfect gentleman could never have said that.

His career begins at the age of sixteen with a hasty and undignified retirement from Eton ; but for the next fourteen years he was guilty of nothing more serious than an Oxford degree and some occasional verse. In 1780 he stood without success for Norwich, and three years later spent six months in Dublin as Chief Secretary at a time when that official was in reality, as Mr. Birrell once described himself without truth, a Castle official. He was now inextricably involved with the Fox-North Coalition, from whose fate have sprung so many hopeful deductions as to the fate of all Coalitions ; and in 1784 he entered Parliament as Whig member for Norwich, one of the few Coalition strongholds in the rising tide of Pitt's majority. He was marked as a supporter of Lord North, whose policy had caused his country's frontiers

frontiers to recede almost as far as his own chin. But Windham's friendships were soon to provide him with a worthier allegiance. He moved at this time in the circle of Doctor Johnson and the Club ; and with Burke he was one of the pall-bearers at Johnson's funeral, to which solemnity he invited Charles Fox. The acquaintance of Burke became rapidly the strongest factor in his development. He stood behind his new leader as one of the managers of Warren Hastings' impeachment, and fought beside him, when the Revolution came, as the perfect anti-Jacobin. Apart from his Burkite drift, his earlier political period was honoured by the correspondence of Sarah Siddons and diversified by the hazardous exercise of ballooning. New sensations are always irresistible to young politicians, and even the solemn process of writing his last wishes could not deter him from a solitary ascent over Oxford.

With

With the Revolution came his real call to the stage ; with a singular penetration he foresaw in '92 the economic revolution which would follow the transformation of political forms. Gradually he followed the drift of the Portland Whigs towards office, impelled violently by the hysterical eloquence of Burke, and in 1794 he became Secretary at War. It cannot be said that Martinique and Flanders are names to write gloriously upon English standards, but at least he studied affairs on the ground at Valenciennes and in Holland. As a strategist he wished to send a fleet to the Mediterranean, less perhaps from any prevision of Nelson's triumphs in southern waters than for the purposes of an indifferent classical allusion. And his tardy criticism of the Duke of York at a time when he was redeeming Tourcoing by a well-conducted retreat hardly merits praise. It was before Windham had lost faith in him that the Duke

Duke earned his defeat and his column by deflecting the English offensive towards the sandhills of Dunkirk ; it was then that he played the part usually allotted to those Austrian commanders without whom military history would be *Hamlet* without Rosencrantz. For seven years Windham remained at the War Office, and returned to it for two years in 1806. He failed in two things, to preserve Europe from democracy and to secure for Burke the indignity of Peerage. He was supremely a conscientious man, but he has left something better than his conscience : from his letters one may learn how Johnson treated a friend, and how Pitt wrote to a colleague.

'MR. PRESIDENT'

It is the pleasing habit of ancient universities to disconcert modern critics by a graceful but obstinate refusal to strike didactic attitudes. They seem to have gone up into the most exquisitely carved pulpits in the world and, once there, with the sounding-board nicely adjusted and the congregation hushed in expectation, they refuse blandly to preach a sermon. Their tone, their charming human products, their engaging angle of view, and their

their characteristic architecture must all impress the really serious observer as lamentably (or is it laudably?) devoid of any avowed educational purpose.

That is perhaps why those strong, persevering men who take Oxford and (let us be broad-minded) Cambridge in their stride between the King Edward VII. University of Bursley and Kermit College, Packwaukee, Wisc., are not infrequently perplexed and irritated into a rash of Royal Commissions and leading articles and pamphlets ("End Them or Mend Them: A Word on University Reform"). It may be hard sometimes to detect the Message of Ashmole, and it is not always easy to catch just what Sheldon Has to Say to Us. But one would be unwise to conclude from the amiable inadvertence of Oxford that she is up to nothing at all. Any theologian will tell you that it is unsound to argue from the inconspicuousness

ness of the curriculum to the conclusion that the curriculum is non-existent.

But, to say truth, the curriculum is, from the educational point of view, the least significant thing in Oxford. You may teach men to follow the movements of the stars or the gyrations of the enclitics. You may impart commercial geography or book-keeping by double entry. But so long as you leave Oxford unimpaired as a temple of the spoken word, you will be doing no harm to its most sacred function. It is, whatever standards they may set up in the Examination Schools or on the river, an academy of speech where a man may incessantly for four years of his life, go out to talk, and talk, and return from talking. He may favour midnight conversation, talking in punts, or the *causeries* of North Oxford (the conversational equivalent of mixed hockey). But to whichever variety of talk he may incline, he will find, when he

he finally turns his cab towards that station which whispered to Miss Zuleika Dobson the last enchantments of the Middle Age, that talk, which is the one thing which Oxford makes no organised attempt to teach, is also the one thing that in Oxford he has thoroughly learnt.

If Oxford is, as one has said, a temple of the spoken word, it contains within itself the Holy of Holies of speech. It lies up an alley from a singularly cheerful and uninspired street, and for six days it masquerades as a normally conducted club. But once in the week, when the sacred lamp is lit, the Union appears in its true character as the innermost school and shrine and altar of articulate speech. It is there that a man may learn and teach himself almost the most precious of Oxford's gifts. That is why the gentle, perfect Oxford man should be most completely the Man who was Thursday.

The

The Union, which has always been singularly unembarrassed by its high tradition, is an artless educator. It may teach a man anything from the art of condensation and the science (so invaluable to all Front Benchers) of leaning gracefully on a despatch-box to the less essential but equally decorative accomplishment of debating deportment, to that profusion of "It will have been your experience, Sir," and "It is for the House to assign the responsibility" and "The Right Honourable, learned, noble and gallant ex-President from Wadham," which is the modern controversialist's equivalent for the sweeping bow and pointed toe of well-conducted duellists. It is, for so many of us, the heart and centre of Oxford. *Floreat: florebit.*

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